

THE ART OF SCHOOLING:  
THE ROLE OF THE AESTHETIC IN EDUCATION

BY

SCOTT R. FARBER

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This work is dedicated  
to my two grandmothers,  
Helen and Bess,  
with loving appreciation  
for their wisdom  
and inspiration.

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By  
Scott R. Farber  
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Chairman: Robert R. Sherman  
Department: Foundations of Education

This study aims to develop the concept and practice of aesthetic education. The basic thesis is that education succeeds to the degree that it becomes an aesthetic experience; consequently, the work of art creates a rich context for schooling. The problem today is that schooling often degenerates into an "an-aesthetic" activity that numbs the natural enthusiasm for teaching and learning. Moreover, the anaesthetic quality of education can contribute to the larger social problems of delinquency, drop-outs, and drugs. Thus, there is an urgent social need for reconstructing the method and aim of aesthetic education.

As a form of philosophic and qualitative research, the study attempts to clarify the topic by first examining the specific social and logical problems that it carries. This

includes the conceptual confusion concerning the meaning of "art" as well as the "aesthetic," the moral problems of its purpose and value, and the logical--and even psychological--difficulty of dualism whereby the aesthetic is reified, split off from, and then opposed to science, reason, and intelligence. An isolated or incomplete conception of art often is misapplied to education, demonstrating that the theory of the aesthetic greatly affects the way it is put into practice.

The philosophy of John Dewey is used as a corrective to the problems of aesthetic inquiry. Dewey's organic, nondualistic method resolves the difficulties that continue to plague the development of aesthetic education. Moreover, the study as a whole embraces the Deweyan attitude that unites philosophy to pedagogy by cultivating the connection between the philosophy of art and the art of schooling. Although Dewey himself did not connect his philosophy of art to his philosophy of education in a systematic way, the logic of his thought leads naturally to that connection; hence, it is the aim of this study to develop it more fully. The final part of the study builds upon a Deweyan conception of art as experience in order to reconstruct a contemporary aesthetic education that uses the work of art as a practical intellectual resource, while also developing the inherent aesthetic potential within the traditional "basics" of language, mathematics, and science.

CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION:  
PURPOSE, METHOD, AND OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

It is, in fact, nothing short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry.

Albert Einstein

The purpose of this study is to clarify the meaning and method of an "aesthetic" education. The basic thesis is that education is more vital and effective to the degree that it becomes an aesthetic experience; consequently, every genuine aesthetic activity carries the seed for educational growth. The problem, however, with schooling today is that it often becomes an "an-aesthetic" activity that numbs the natural enthusiasm for teaching and learning. Although there are many voices currently calling to reform, if not transform, American education, each reflects a deeper problem: for too many students schooling seems to be a dreaded and boring routine and, thus, a root cause for the larger social issues of delinquency, drop-outs, and drugs.

Achieving "excellence" in and through education involves renewing the activity of schooling when it fails to inspire the excitement and motivation that make education a vitally meaningful--that is, aesthetic--experience. The process of disciplined inquiry rings hollow unless based on

such experiences. Yet, as the institutionalized setting for formal education, schools often appear as sterile places where students and teachers work without the creative and fulfilling attitude that transforms all work, and indeed life itself, into the quality of art. In our schools and other workplaces we have neglected to cultivate an immediate aesthetic atmosphere of value and appreciation. Consequently, the "art of schooling" has been lost because we have abandoned and ignored the art in schooling, which signifies the inherent creative quality developed through teaching and learning.

There is also a larger social problem indicated by the absence of a genuinely aesthetic method and aim within education, for this condition reflects the isolation and misunderstanding of the aesthetic within our culture as a whole. Therefore, the goal of this study is to recover the larger social value of the aesthetic within all daily activities--but especially in schooling--as a fundamental agent of meaning, vitality, and integration. The idea of the aesthetic will be developed in order to connote the vivid, unifying quality of any integral experience as well as to denote the production and perception of "art," which specifically embodies that immediately felt quality.

#### Philosophy as Qualitative Method

The foundation and inspiration for this study is the work of the American philosopher John Dewey. There are reasons for using Dewey's philosophy as a consistent resource

when discussing the problems connected with the idea and practice of aesthetic education.<sup>1</sup> The first concerns the fact of Dewey's immense social influence. As a product and reflection of our own culture, he articulated a broad range of theoretical issues and practical problems within American society and education.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Dewey's work has endured. Since he first began writing over a century ago, he has been so often interpreted (and as often misinterpreted) that his work continues to be cited for the potential reform, as well as the present failings, of modern education! No other single writer or thinker has so deeply affected the theory and practice of American schooling as has John Dewey.<sup>3</sup>

The importance of a philosophic method of research signifies another reason for using a Deweyan approach. Dewey's entire work is characterized by an experiential, holistic method of inquiry, that is, a nondualistic logic that focuses on the dynamic interaction of context and consciousness. This organic method of inquiry, emphasizing process and integration, is suited especially well for any discussion of art or education. In addition, Dewey always related philosophical inquiry to conduct and action, which signifies the practical concerns of everyday life. The meaning of "pragmatism" (from the Greek word praxis, "to act") implies this attitude; consequently, this study too aims beyond a mere theoretical analysis toward methods of application in social and educational practice.

A third reason has to do with the specific connection between philosophy and education. John Dewey emphasized, perhaps more than any other modern thinker, the philosophical significance of education, as well as the educational significance of philosophy.<sup>4</sup> The organic relation between philosophy and education also is central to this study, which connects aesthetic inquiry--a traditional discipline of philosophy--to pedagogy. Although Dewey fully outlined a complete philosophy of education in Democracy and Education and later developed a comprehensive theory of art and aesthetic experience in Art as Experience, he did not explicitly integrate the two themes in a systematic way. The logic of his thought, however, leads naturally to this integration, and it is the aim of this dissertation to develop it more fully.

Therefore, although other sources are relevant and useful, John Dewey, for the reasons given above, represents the single best philosophic resource for constructing a unified social, moral, and intellectual understanding of the role of the aesthetic in the process of American education. Moreover, the ultimate aim of this study is toward cultivating in our thought and culture, as well as in our schools, what Dewey once called the "principle of integration."<sup>5</sup> After all, schools represent the culture's ordered means for insuring its own conservation and renewal; hence, with schooling as a social vehicle, aesthetic experience could become a method for

realizing the principle of integration both in social institutions and in the individuals who compose the society. By renewing the aesthetic in schooling, the attitude of art can extend beyond the classroom, enriching the value of our personal work and recreation as well.

The specific idea of aesthetic education is not new in itself, and other dissertations have been done to develop, or at least imply, this theme. However, these studies represent either a broader, more remote, nonDeweyan perspective or else a more limited focus that compares Dewey's philosophy of art with that of another; one author even develops a pragmatic aesthetic through an orientation that dissociates it from art.<sup>6</sup> Although one goal of this study is to reconstruct the meaning of the aesthetic, it does so by also embracing and developing the meaning of art. Furthermore, the need for a renewed aesthetic is grounded in certain logical and moral problems of present culture, which then point to a renewal of schooling. Thus, a uniquely pragmatic and existential method is employed in order to use philosophy as a tool first to analyze problems in social and educational practice and then to redirect experience in a way that can resolve these difficulties. By developing the inherent worth and qualitative immediacy of the aesthetic along with its practical consequences, the study also can be called a pragmatic/phenomenological approach.<sup>7</sup>



The general method of the study, then, is one of philosophical analysis as well as synthesis--to reconstruct the idea and practice of the aesthetic within education. Philosophy itself is an enduring human activity that always is derived from, and then influences, the social context from which it originates. Consequently, a contemporary philosophical reconstruction of the aesthetic emerges from and applies to the present problems and practices of daily life. The issue that this study addresses, therefore, is not confined narrowly to education but represents a larger concern within philosophy and culture. Indeed, one function of philosophy, as Dewey demonstrated, is to reveal the living link between schooling and the larger social structure that education both reflects and reforms. By examining the significance of art and aesthetic inquiry for the practice of teaching and learning, the underlying premise of this study reinforces the Deweyan connection between society, philosophy, and schooling.

Moreover, although the focus of this study is on the philosophy of education, the meaning of art also has a profound significance for philosophy as a whole. Throughout history works of art have been used to express philosophical perspectives, just as philosophers have used aesthetic forms, such as poetry, to embody their ideas. The point here is that the activity of philosophy is itself a form and formative agent of culture; hence, it is connected inherently to the

idea and practice of the aesthetic, which signifies art as form and forming. Despite the different theoretical perspectives within modern philosophic discourse, philosophy functions as a social gestalt, a unifying qualitative method expressing a range of contemporary issues and concerns. Thus, if the various directions in modern philosophy are taken as an organic composite, like the many facets of a brilliant gem, then the perspectives and problems of each approach can be used to recreate a new theory and practice of the aesthetic.

Aesthetic inquiry traditionally has occupied a large niche within philosophy, and contemporary philosophy is no exception. It is not surprising, then, that all of the major movements in modern Western philosophy, namely, existentialism, phenomenology, and linguistic analysis--as well as the Deweyan perspective that informs this study--have examined the meaning of art and aesthetic experience. Hence, each of these "schools" of contemporary philosophy can contribute something to this study. In fact, the meaning of "school" is itself significant, for in the ancient world the first schools, or organized centers for teaching and learning, were devoted to philosophy.<sup>8</sup>

It is also worth noting that existentialist philosophers specifically have more than just emphasized the value of art and creativity for human experience. They have practiced what they preached, in a sense, by employing works of art, that is, uniquely aesthetic means, to present their

ideas. Indeed, not since the ancient Greeks has any other movement in the history of philosophy used, to the same extent, artistic expression as a method of philosophic communication; few intellectual movements so deeply affect the content of art as has existentialism.<sup>9</sup> More to the point, the cultural interaction between aesthetic method and philosophic content is important because it bears upon the renewal of artistic forms as a means of educational communication. In other words, the relation between philosophy and art has enormous implications for pedagogy, where the unity of content and method is vital.

To reiterate, although based primarily on a Deweyan methodology, this study incorporates a perspective of each of the schools within modern philosophy. After all, this is consistent with the general theme of the aesthetic as the principle of integration. Thus, the study embraces the existentialist emphasis on the ultimate value of artistic and creative experience, as well as the phenomenological perspective that has focused on the role of aesthetic immediacy and sense perception. Furthermore, in order to help alleviate the thorny problems of philosophic meaning and expression, the attitude and tools of analytic philosophy are used in order to clarify concepts and communicate clearly. However, rather than stop with clarity of meaning, the goal and cementing glue of this inquiry is the Deweyan pragmatic attitude, which sees philosophy's role ultimately to be a

method providing direction and guidance for social and individual action.

To sum up, the renewed attention to art within modern philosophy implies that a reconstructed meaning of the aesthetic is vital to culture at large and, hence, education specifically. Consequently, this study weaves the various threads of modern philosophical discourse into a unified fabric of aesthetic inquiry. Each perspective lends a shade of color and value that enriches philosophy and, thus, this work as a whole. However, the study is rooted primarily in a uniquely Deweyan methodology, which is pragmatic, experiential, and nondualistic, because the other methods--and this is a key point--contain certain limiting problems that will be discussed in the next chapter.

#### A Cumulative Outline

As a form of qualitative research, this study aims to clarify the concepts and ideas under discussion, to place the topic in its historical and social contexts, and to present concrete ways in which this theory of teaching and learning can be used in actual practice. These criteria of clarification and context are appropriate to the use of philosophy as a method of qualitative research in education.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the study proceeds in a pragmatic cumulative manner with each chapter building on what comes before and preparing for what comes after. Thus, the study begins by reviewing the logical, social, and moral issues

associated with the theory and practice of the aesthetic today. Such a review, which emphasizes the problems of definition, purpose, and dualism, then can be used to focus the meaning of the aesthetic through a Deweyan resolution of these current and concrete difficulties. Finally, the renewed idea of the aesthetic can be applied to transform specific methods and aims within the school curriculum.

However, because of the very real problem of meaning, it is no coincidence that contemporary inquiries into the subject of aesthetics, as it relates to schooling, reveal a remarkable divergence on the definition of an aesthetic education.<sup>11</sup> Does aesthetic education signify an enriched (often elitist) arts education program or a more inclusive (and ambiguous) "education through art?" Does aesthetic education suggest a particular subject of study or, rather, a method of instruction? And how is aesthetic education related to the entire curriculum? Since our idea of the aesthetic (like that of any concept) inevitably will affect the way it is put into action, it is necessary to describe the conceptual confusion in order to reformulate a coherent meaning that then can bear on the practice of schooling.

Consequently, in the second chapter problems with the meaning of the aesthetic are examined. Etymologically, the word "aesthetic" signifies immediate sense experience, the act of perception. Popular use, however, restricts the aesthetic to being vaguely synonymous with beauty or artistic taste.

This connotation tends to isolate the aesthetic from the normal processes of living, as if some activities or persons are inherently more "aesthetic" than others. In our culture, "art" usually refers to the concert, theatre, museum, or some other special event, and, thus, aesthetic experiences generally are dissociated from everyday activities--separated from industry, religion, sports, science, and especially education. The full meaning of the aesthetic, therefore, has been reduced and needs to be rebuilt, for if it is not, then an incomplete idea is translated narrowly into programs of "aesthetic education."

Because the larger social meaning of the aesthetic has been distorted, the art experience has been isolated within the school curriculum. But if we compare the classical Greek culture where the idea of aesthetic experience first was developed, we find a more integrative perspective of art in unity with social and educational activities. Such a model sorely is needed in our own technical, highly specialized culture. Indeed, the Greek association of technology (techne) and, by implication, science with aesthetic activity reveals, as Dewey also noted, a basic unity between art and science.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, this ancient holistic attitude neither elevated and, hence, isolated the status of "fine" art, nor did it depreciate the vocational or "practical" arts. We, on the other hand, have turned such distinctions into social separations of value and purpose. Therefore, one aim of this

study is to renew the logic that discovers the aesthetic potential within science and technology along with the intellectual potential within art. Such an attitude would affect education by unifying the practical need for vocational or technical training with the cultural ideals of a liberal "arts" learning.

In the third chapter the moral questions of aesthetic purpose and value are addressed: how is aesthetic experience evaluated (or even devaluated), how does art affect morals, and what is the relation between art and the moral aims of education? The need for a deeper social and ethical understanding of art is suggested by our often ambivalent attitude toward it. Hence, even though the "immoral" effects--and proposed censorship--of popular as well as traditional art forms increasingly stir debate, the morally liberating power of art was defended and celebrated when an artist, a playwright, recently became the new leader of Czechoslovakia!

Moreover, the arts and aesthetic experiences, commonly associated with body and sense rather than mind and intellect, generally have been undervalued for their moral and intellectual contribution to the process of education. Consequently, when the pedagogical value of appreciating or producing art is recognized, it is almost always justified in schooling solely on the grounds of its "intrinsic" worth because, it is assumed, art has no "practical" use. If the aesthetic is viewed merely as an inherent "end-in-itself,"

then its larger value as a means toward other educational goals remains undeveloped. The modern idea of "art for art's sake," in other words, has led to the present situation in which aesthetic experience in schooling is stripped of any conscious ethical, intellectual, or scientific aim.

In the fourth chapter the "split-brain" theory is examined as a concrete and contemporary example of how the age old problem of dichotomy still infects the present conception and implementation of the aesthetic. Perhaps the main logical (and psychological) difficulty connected with the idea and practice of the aesthetic is the problem of dualism. The realm of aesthetic experience, especially as it pertains to art, traditionally has been viewed as separate from--and even opposed to--science and reason. If feeling is divorced from thinking and sensing is set off from reasoning, then education is based on a fragmented model of human consciousness. This is precisely the case with the current "left-brain/right-brain" paradigm that preserves the traditional philosophic dualisms and through its popular (mis)interpretation adversely affects educational theory and practice.

Conceptual dualisms between reason and emotion, science and art, "left-brain" and "right-brain," and so forth, serve to muddle instead of clarify the full significance of what an aesthetic education really stands for. Thus, the concept of aesthetic education must be viewed not as somehow opposed to logic or reason--which really fulfill it--but



rather in contrast to an "anaesthetic" education, which numbs and closes off the desire to learn. A genuine aesthetic education integrates art and science and thinking and feeling in a truly holistic manner. Correcting the problem of dualism, therefore, is fundamental to this study. Ironically, the great mistake of many programs of aesthetic or "holistic" education has been to preserve the paradigm of dichotomy while merely shifting the focus; hence, after recognizing the lack of artistic and affective quality within traditional academic schooling, such programs often swing to the other extreme, promoting an almost anti-intellectual bias.

In Experience and Education, Dewey referred to such a mechanical "either/or" type of reaction as a recurring problem for education.<sup>13</sup> And, indeed, the recent history of American schooling reveals this same pendulum motion from one educational extreme to the other, another example of dualism. In the 1960s, education witnessed the progressive "open school" movement, whereas by the 1980s the reaction had swung to a more conservative "back to basics" reform. The former position (now sometimes called "alternative" schooling) tends to view art and creativity as a panacea, to the point of neglecting structure, content, and method. The latter view, however, often sees aesthetic experience in schools as somehow frivolous and subordinate to the more traditional intellectual disciplines, without developing the aesthetic potential within those very subjects.

After demonstrating the specific problems of aesthetic research (which is itself a "searching" for meaning and value), the fifth and sixth chapters act as a fulcrum by developing a Deweyan interpretation of the aesthetic. In his theories of art as well as education, Dewey addressed the same difficulties that continue to plague the idea and practice of the aesthetic in schooling. Thus, the fifth chapter presents a Deweyan corrective to the "split-brain" idea and, so, resolves the larger logical problem of dualism; in addition, the Deweyan idea of the qualitative, and especially "qualitative thinking," is developed in order to clarify and unify the complete meaning of the aesthetic.<sup>14</sup> In the sixth chapter a Deweyan corrective to the problems of aesthetic purpose and value is used in order to reconstruct the moral and pragmatic function within the work of art.

Thus, the fifth and sixth chapters serve as a bridge to the final part of the study, which builds upon a Deweyan clarification of aesthetic theory in order to renew aesthetic practice in education. Aesthetic practice in schooling demands concrete methods and specific aims. Embodying the pragmatic principle of integration, the purpose of the two final chapters is to outline a complete aesthetic education that integrates, so to speak, the "art" of science with the "science" of art. Such an aesthetic pedagogy discovers the quality of art within both the subject matter and method of

instruction; indeed, the aesthetic actually functions to unify content and method.

The seventh chapter, then, develops the specific role of art education within the school curriculum. Currently there is a hot debate questioning how and even why art should be taught in our nation's schools.<sup>15</sup> Apparently, the field of art education is undergoing its own paradigm shift from a "creative" method to a "discipline-based" content.<sup>16</sup> The danger, again, is that this may lead to a rather dogmatic mechanical division of educational practice. In contrast, a complete art education both conserves the values of the past while also creating new meanings; it balances creative enthusiasm with academic discipline by integrating the student's needs with the teacher's knowledge.

Consequently, an aesthetic based curriculum begins with clarifying the role of the arts in education as a fundamental means toward moral, intellectual, and emotional growth, rather than being merely an "easy elective" frill or a specialized technical activity, which, unfortunately, is the state of art education today. Precisely because of their heightened aesthetic content, the arts are the obvious foundation for developing an aesthetic method of teaching and learning. Moreover, such aesthetic subject matter includes all the arts, even the "kin-esthetic" forms (like the martial arts) which cultivate the physical discipline, health, and

body awareness that is often neglected in our current "physical education" programs.

Yet, ironically, sometimes instruction in art, such as music education, degenerates into an anaesthetic activity that focuses mechanically on drill, conformity, technique, and competition, rather than genuine aesthetic appreciation and creation.<sup>17</sup> The critics of a "discipline-based art education" also argue that there is a real risk of reducing visual art study to a rigid formalism of technical measurement and memorization of fact.<sup>18</sup> However, if the arts can function to awaken us to the possibilities of experience, then a genuine aesthetic schooling in art can create an open--even philosophic--attitude toward all our lived activities, and this points to art's practical and ethical consequences.

Thus, the production and perception of art forms has an enormous pedagogic potential for facilitating and illuminating all academic learning. Art can be used as a means to develop intelligence and character, making it more than merely an end in itself. Art education cultivates qualitative thought and perception. The potential for aesthetic experience inherent in art education generates the energy, enthusiasm, and questioning attitude so vital to any learning process. From a pedagogical perspective, aesthetic experience propels the most important learning of all, namely, learning how to learn.

The point is that the aesthetic resides within and, indeed, integrates the entire school curriculum. Thus, while the realization of a complete aesthetic education begins with the arts, it certainly does not stop with the arts education program. Rather, these aesthetic "basics," that is, the use and appreciation of the arts themselves, could lead naturally into the profound educational significance of the humanities. As the integrative and interdisciplinary bridge connecting the systematic method of scientific inquiry with the subject matter of artistic experience, the study of the humanities is central to what an aesthetic education itself is all about.

The eighth chapter begins, then, with a discussion of the full use of the humanities as a fundamental component of aesthetic education. While the arts deal directly with aesthetic subject matter, with poetry, painting, music, dance, and other forms of artistic expression, the humanities function as a bridge to aesthetic method, that is, to the philosophical, historical, and critical inquiry into such expressive forms of human communication. However, the humanities traditionally are taught from a peculiar standpoint, either chronologically across time or categorically reduced to separate disciplines such as literature, philosophy, and art history.<sup>19</sup> Although these perspectives are necessary, they are not sufficient because the study of the humanities, perhaps more than any other academic discipline, requires an interdisciplinary approach

that also encourages practical aesthetic experience with the arts. When the appreciation of humanity's culture coincides with the actual "doing" of the humanities, through perceptual and creative activities, the understanding of the subject as a whole is immensely enriched.<sup>20</sup>

Furthermore, the "human-ities" reflect the human condition and thus signify not an isolated area of study, but all subjects of inquiry to the extent that they are connected to human interests and aims. From this, again Deweyan, perspective, all school subjects can contribute to the study of our humanity, our common human experience. This means that the value of the humanities is central to the idea of aesthetic education because the humanities serve as the vital interdisciplinary and unifying agent within the entire school curriculum--a curriculum that presently is characterized by the fragmentation and isolation of studies.

The eighth chapter concludes by demonstrating how those school subjects usually not associated with art and aesthetic experience can become an integral and necessary part of a genuine aesthetic education. The current "back to basics" educational reform movement largely emphasizes the common core curriculum aims of language, mathematics, and science. Therefore, after being rooted in the educational use of the arts and humanities, a complete system of aesthetic education must be developed to indicate how these traditional "basics" also could become a consequence of effectively used

aesthetic methods and materials. In this way, not only is the experience of art expanded and enriched, but scientific inquiry and reflective thinking are grounded in and through aesthetic learning experiences.

Consequently, the visually and vitally charged "stories," in film, literature, and theatre, for example, can be put back into the study of "hi-story." Scientific principles can be connected to the artistic reproduction and aesthetic observation of natural forms. The learning of reading and writing can be grounded in the universal aesthetic expressions of language, poetry, and song. Geometric and other mathematical ideas can be illuminated through movement, painting, and architecture. Finally, the modern innovations of computer and video technology can be developed in schools as aesthetic as well as intellectual instruments. And as all this occurs, we begin to discover the profound unity between art and science--and the connection between art as a creative attitude and education as a social science.

In conclusion, the basic underlying theme of this study is that education itself is an art, and, thus, the experience of art must inform and enliven every school subject, including the method of their instruction. Poetry and philosophy are born together. In education as in art, form and content must invigorate one another or else the outcome becomes forced, mechanical, and artificial. Thus, by using music, movement, painting, and so forth, as an

intellectual instrument, that is, as a method to develop intelligence, the "science of art" emerges through the process of schooling. Reciprocally, when the content of philosophy, physics, mathematics, history, geography, psychology, language, or any other subject of inquiry is vitalized through a presentation in aesthetic form, then schools can begin to discover the "art of science" as a profound educational tool. In this way, a holistic and pragmatic education can be developed that makes use of aesthetic subjects, methods, and qualities for the ultimate aesthetic aim of growth itself.

#### Notes:

1. Dewey's philosophy frequently is cited, and often criticized, in conjunction with the idea of aesthetic education or aesthetic experience in education. See, for example, Paul Shore, A Critique of Three Theories of Aesthetic Experience in Education (Ph.D. dissertation: Stanford University, 1986); C.M. Smith, "The Aesthetics of John Dewey and Aesthetic Education," Educational Theory, vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 1971), 131-145; and David Swanger, "Shadow and Light: Read, Dewey, Plato, and Aesthetic Education," Journal of Education, vol. 164, no. 3 (Summer 1982), 256-269.
2. Though born in 1859 and first recognized as a prominent teacher and philosopher before the end of that century, Dewey lived well into the twentieth century; he died in 1952. His work is significant because it emerged from the unique soil of American culture, and it still addresses the potentials and problems of our own society. For a biography of Dewey's life, see George Dykhuizen, The Life and Mind of John Dewey (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973).
3. For an account of Dewey's vast influence on American education, see Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the School (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961); and Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1978; orig. pub. 1935).



4. See John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916), pp. 328-329: "If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education. . . . [Reciprocally,] education is the laboratory in which philosophic distinctions become concrete and are tested."
5. John Dewey, "Affective Thought in Logic and Painting" (1926), in John Dewey on Education, ed. by R.D. Archambault (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 148.
6. See Carol Rosenberg, Towards an Aesthetic Education: An Interpretation of Rousseau, Schiller, and Kierkegaard (Ph.D. dissertation: Harvard University, 1985); Laura Mindek, Art as a Way of Worldmaking: The Pragmatic-Phenomenological Perspective as a Synthesis of the Work of Dewey and Heidegger (Ph.D. dissertation: Rutgers University, 1984); and Edward Petkus, A Critical Analysis of Aesthetics and its Implications for the Role of Public Philosophy and Educational Practice (Ph.D. dissertation: Rutgers University, 1985).
7. For the connection between Dewey's pragmatism and phenomenology, see Victor Kestenbaum, The Phenomenological Sense of John Dewey: Habit and Meaning (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1977); and also Mindek, Art as a Way of Worldmaking.
8. See H.I. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity, trans. by G. Lamb (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982; orig. pub. 1948).
9. Nietzsche, a pioneer of modern existentialism, expressed a strong literary quality throughout his work; Kierkegaard too considered himself a "poet-philosopher" and explored distinctly aesthetic themes; and Jean-Paul Sartre has continued this tradition by producing existentialist dramas for the stage. The relation between philosophic content and aesthetic method is reciprocal; not only have the philosophers used drama, allegory, and a poetic style to express their thought, but modern painters, filmmakers, and writers (such as Munch, Bergmann, Beckett, Camus, Kafka, and Woody Allen) also have developed profound existentialist themes in their works of art.
10. James Giarelli and J.J. Chambliss, "Philosophy of Education as Qualitative Inquiry," Journal of Thought, vol. 19, no. 2 (Summer 1984), 34-46.

11. For a few examples of these divergent and even contradictory perspectives related to the idea of the aesthetic in education, see David Ecker and Eugene Kaelin, "The Limits of Aesthetic Inquiry: A Guide to Educational Research," Philosophical Redirection of Educational Research: Seventy-first Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, ed. by L. Thomas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), vol. 1, 258-286; Mary Erickson, "Historical Thinking and Aesthetic Education," Journal of Aesthetic Education, vol. 13, no. 4 (Oct. 1979), 81-92; Edmund Feldman, "The Educational Value of Aesthetic Experience," Harvard Educational Review, vol. 21 (Fall 1951), 225-232; Maxine Greene, "Aesthetic Literacy in General Education," Philosophy and Education: Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, ed. by J. Soltis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), vol. 1, 114-141; Stanley Madeja, "On the Third Domain: Curriculum Development in Aesthetic Education," Journal of Aesthetic Education, vol. 4, no. 2 (April 1970), 5-8; Wellington Madenfort, "Aesthetic Education: An Education for the Immediacy of Sensuous Experience," Art Education, vol. 25, no. 5 (May 1972), 10-14; Ruby Meager, "The Dangers of Aestheticism in Schooling," Journal of Philosophy of Education, vol. 15, no. 1 (1981), 23-31; Louis Arnaud Reid, "Knowledge, Morals, and Aesthetic Education," Journal of Aesthetic Education, vol. 2, no. 3 (July 1968), 41-54; Bennett Reimer, "Education for Aesthetic Awareness: The Cleveland Area Project," Music Educators Journal, vol. 64 (1978), 66-69; and Ralph Smith, "Aesthetic Criticism: The Method of Aesthetic Education," Studies in Art Education, vol. 9, no. 3 (Spring 1968), 12-31.
12. John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934), p. 149: "The reproduction of the order of natural changes and the perception of that order were at first close together, so close that no distinction existed between art and science. They were both called techne."
13. John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: Collier Books, 1938), p. 17.
14. See John Dewey, "Qualitative Thought," in John Dewey: On Experience, Nature, and Freedom, ed. by Richard Bernstein (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), 176-198.
15. Margaret Moorman, "The Great Art Education Debate," Art News (summer 1989), 124-131.

16. See Discipline-Based Art Education: Origins, Meaning, and Development, ed. by R.A. Smith (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989).
17. J. Mercer, "Is the Curriculum the Score--or More?" Music Educators Journal, vol. 58 (1972), 51-53.
18. See Beyond DBAE: The Case for Multiple Visions of Art Education, ed. by J. Burton, A. Lederman, and P. London, (North Dartmouth, MA: University Council on Art Education, 1988).
19. See A. Didier Graeffe, Creative Education in the Humanities (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951).
20. See Michael Day, "The Compatibility of Art History and Studio Art Activity in the Junior High School Art Program," Studies in Art Education, vol. 10 (1969), 57-65, where practical art experience was shown to increase and facilitate the learning of art history.

CHAPTER 2  
PROBLEMS OF DEFINITION:  
THE MEANING OF THE AESTHETIC

If the doors of perception were cleansed, / Everything  
would appear to man as it is, infinite. / For man has  
closed himself up, / Till he sees all things through  
narrow chinks of his cavern.

William Blake

In order to develop the practice of aesthetic education, the concept of the aesthetic itself first must be clarified. Yet the meaning of the aesthetic in philosophy and culture is varied and confusing. For many people today the word "aesthetic" connotes some vague sense of artistic beauty or appreciation. The study of education, moreover, has done little to help focus the concept; one textbook, for example, defines the aesthetic rather ambiguously as dealing with "values in beauty and art."<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, not only is the contemporary meaning of the aesthetic vague and unclear, but that meaning has come to imply artistic value in a way that isolates certain preordained activities deemed "aesthetic" from those that are not. Consequently, the aim of this chapter is to survey the problems of aesthetic meaning in order to work toward a more focused and clearer understanding. The problems presented here will be used to help redefine the meaning of art and the aesthetic, for the process of conceptual clarification begins by demonstrating the need for

such work. In a later chapter, a Deweyan interpretation of the aesthetic will be developed, because Dewey clearly had anticipated and resolved this conceptual problem of meaning.

In contemporary culture, art and aesthetic activities somehow are segregated from the everyday experiences of life, associated more with concerts, museum exhibits, the ballet, the theatre, famous celebrities, and so on, and thereby separated from the ordinary activities of living. Dissociated from health, business, religion, sports, and especially schooling, the aesthetic has become compartmentalized; thus, its full significance has been restricted and distorted. This isolation of the aesthetic operates toward two extremes. In its connotation of creating "art," the meaning of the aesthetic often is elevated to some lofty status occupied by "beauty" and "genius"; but, paradoxically, by also signifying immediate physical perception, the aesthetic is depreciated as merely bodily and sensuous--an idea that, as we shall see in the next chapter, carries definite moral implications.

The original meaning of the aesthetic is derived from a Greek verb denoting the act of sensory perception. Thus, in its full etymological and existential significance, the aesthetic refers to a fundamental feature of human experience, namely sensory or perceptual awareness. It is important to note that the Greek concept of aisthetikos was used semantically to distinguish the tangible world of "things material," that is, capable of concrete sensory perception,

from the abstract world of things "thinkable or immaterial."<sup>2</sup>

The very idea of the aesthetic, in other words, represented a conscious formulation of the difference between the qualitative, perceptual immediacy of experience and its conceptual mediation through reflection and abstract thought. The main problem here concerns the way in which that fundamental philosophic distinction has been interpreted across time and culture.

### The Greek Heritage

For an historical as well as a philosophical understanding of aesthetic inquiry, one must begin with the culture of ancient Greece where the seminal theoretical distinction between sense (aisthesis) and reason (logos) first originated. The problem today is that this early logical (as well as social) distinction usually is interpreted as a formal division. Even though the roots of this separation can be traced back to Plato and Greek philosophy, the Greeks themselves lived in a much less specialized society that in practice acknowledged the unity of the aesthetic with religious, scientific, and educational pursuits. The irony is that by developing the seminal idea of the aesthetic as a form of experience, Greek philosophy gave birth to a theoretical dualism and, hence, a problem of meaning that still exists. Nonetheless, Greek culture embodied an attitude that integrated the aesthetic into all forms of social activity. Therefore, by examining the context in which Greek philosophy

and education were carried out, we can trace not only the origin of the contemporary problems of aesthetic inquiry but also use that context to reconstruct the role of the aesthetic in present education and society.

The chief semantic problem, to repeat, is that the original Greek philosophic distinction between sense and thought has become interpreted as a rigid and reified dualism--logically, psychologically, and ontologically. This dualism then functions erroneously to divorce feeling from thinking, perception from conception, or, to use a popular example (which will be discussed in the fourth chapter), the "right-brain" from the "left-brain." All of this tends, ultimately, to preserve the false separation of art from science, a separation that leads to adverse social and educational conditions. In terms of this study, the traditional theoretical division has resulted in an assumed dichotomy between the aesthetic and the intellect. As a corrective, the study will work toward a reconstructed idea of the aesthetic that signifies the immediately vital and unifying quality within any potential experience, whether that experience is practical or recreational and whether it is characterized as "art" or "science."

By containing a certain dualism in embryo, the analytic insight of Greek thought has conditioned the entire history of Western philosophy, giving birth to a dialectical conception of the empirical on one side against the rational

on the other--a separation of aesthetic perceptions from abstract conceptions. In Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, Dewey noted that the same seminal philosophic distinction between the qualitative world of immediate experience and its mediation through reflective thought historically has been misinterpreted as an epistemological division rather than an organic continuum.<sup>3</sup> His point was that the logical analysis, though appropriate, has seeded certain social and psychological dualisms that are inappropriate and, as such, have negative consequences for thought and culture. Dewey stated the matter bluntly in a way that indicates both the premise and the attitude of this study:

The basic problem of present culture and associated living is that of effecting integration where division now exists. The problem cannot be solved apart from a unified logical method of attack and procedure.<sup>4</sup>

Even though the conscious formulation of the aesthetic within Greek culture planted the seeds of the present problem, the culture from which the idea emerged practiced a pervasive aesthetic appreciation. Thus, the more holistic character of Greek culture contrasts sharply with our present highly technical and specialized society in which we have isolated and abstracted the aesthetic from the ordinary processes of living. Classical Greek culture integrated aesthetic form and content with social and educational aims; hence, the relation between beauty and conduct was cultivated. A pervasive aesthetic attitude was manifested in the union of art with spiritual ideals, in the keen artistic appreciation of



athletics, architecture, astronomy, and mathematics, and in the educational as well as ethical value of music, poetry, and tragic drama.<sup>5</sup> The aesthetic quality that imbued all elements of classical Greek culture contributed to its enduring and universally appreciated works of art, many of which still are called "classics."

Modern society, in contrast, has retained and developed the theoretical distinction of the aesthetic, but it has lost the practical attitude that cultivated art within all normal daily activities. Hence, today the aesthetic has become an "art-ificial" decor of civilization, signalling the mere superficial value of art. The complete meaning and social function of the aesthetic, therefore, remain unfulfilled. Yet by rediscovering the full meaning of the aesthetic, not only is art invigorated, but society as a whole is reformed and integrated. Consequently, as Dewey long ago observed in an essay significantly titled "Affective Thought in Logic and Painting," it is only by philosophically reconstructing the social meaning of the aesthetic that

it then becomes possible to break down the traditional separation between scientific and intellectual systems and those of art, and also to further the application of the principle of integration to the relationship of those elements of culture which are so segregated in our present life . . . . [moreover,] unless some integration can be attained, the always increasing isolations and oppositions consequent upon the growth of specialization in all fields will in the end disrupt our civilization.<sup>6</sup>

Dewey's warning is even more relevant today. Hence, from a social perspective, part of the problem of aesthetic

meaning stems from the isolation of modern institutions and occupations from one another: science, business, politics, religion, health, and schooling conduct their affairs, for the most part, separate from one another and devoid of the aesthetic attitude that alone can effect their unification. We must, therefore, recognize the distorted and fragmented view of the aesthetic in modern culture at large in order to understand the problematic implications of this social situation as it is reflected in education, for schooling always embodies and reflects the values and attitudes of the society in which it exists.

And so, returning to the source of the problem, the logical distinction made by the Greeks between aesthetic activity and intellectual inquiry was also a sociological reflection of the context in which it originated. In other words, the ancient Greek poets, philosophers, and other "intellectuals," who dealt with speculative and theoretical matters, occupied a different social status compared to the utilitarian workers, such as artisans and craftsmen engaged in the physical--that is, "aesthetic"--manipulation of concrete materials.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the very idea of aisthetikos arose, in large part, because of the Greek philosophical and social need to distinguish the more "scientific" role of theory and thought (the role of the philosophers themselves), from the more common, practical, and technical experience of "aesthetic" production and perception.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, it is useful to remember that for the Greeks both types of activities embodied reason or reflective thinking, which, also for them, defined the essence of being human. The "scientific" activity of philosopher, astronomer, and physician and the "artistic" activity of practical aesthetic productions were alike in that both required a certain logical method and aim--a rational process constituting what the Greeks called techne. It is, moreover, a revealing historical irony that "techno-logy" today is most often associated with science, rather than with the methods of art, while the aesthetic is considered an inherent end-in-itself with little or no practical value! In addition, the poet's work no longer is considered ethical, philosophical, and educational, as it was in the Greek world, while the creative arts (which formed an intelligently guided techne for the Greeks) today are associated more with the emotional and the intuitive than with reason and technology! This contrast in attitude between the ancient and modern worlds serves to highlight the present problem.

To sum up, it is a testament to the profundity of Greek thought that it is the source of a practical and theoretical problem that still exists, namely the problem of aesthetic meaning. The Greek philosophic distinction between the aesthetic and the intellect mirrored the society in which it developed, just as the present conception of the aesthetic still mirrors both the philosophy that defines it and the

society that puts it into practice. Despite the inherent unity of art and science within Greek culture, the seminal distinction between the concrete phenomenon of sense perception and the realm of rational, abstract, and even transcendental existence (noumenon) has led to the present bifurcation of the aesthetic from the intellect, which poses a grave problem for both education and philosophy. In addition, the Greek social distinction between practical aesthetic occupations and those of a more scientific or intellectual nature has led to the further separation of theory from practice. Thus, the modern dualism of art versus science preserves a separation in social value between aesthetic and intellectual activities, which is then translated to the practice of schooling. Of course, the present practical distortion of the aesthetic in education also is connected to and rooted in a similar conceptual distortion, which, again, points to the inherent unity of philosophy and education--another relation that was developed initially in the ancient Greek world.<sup>9</sup>

#### Aesthetic Practice--Problems for Education

The relation between philosophy and education, as well as its Greek origin, is illuminated through modern phenomenology. Phenomenology focuses literally on the aesthetic in experience, developing the intrinsic value within the qualitatively concrete and, hence, nonconceptual character of immediately perceived phenomena. While renewing the

meaning of art and aesthetic experience, the difficulty with such a philosophic method is that it tends to emphasize aesthetic immediacy at the expense of reflective or intellectual activities that function to mediate such vital, direct experiences. Thus, the split between sense and thought is retained and even reinforced, and as such it is then translated into educational practice.

For example, by using a phenomenological perspective one author has advocated an aesthetic education based exclusively on "the immediacy of sensuous experience."<sup>10</sup> While indeed valuable for its development of aesthetic awareness, such a program, nonetheless, denies the use of conceptualized methods, theories, and techniques as a way to cultivate the aesthetic in education. Moreover, the assumption that the aesthetic can be divorced from the intellect, that conceptual thinking necessarily restricts the fulfillment of aesthetic experience, is erroneous. As Dewey bluntly put it, "The opposition of quality as immediate and sensuous to relation as purely mediate and intellectual is false in general theory, psychological and philosophical."<sup>11</sup>

Although the primary qualitative experience of producing and perceiving art is indeed distinct from, say, thinking in words, reflective inquiry functions to inform and complete such aesthetic acts. In a genuine aesthetic education, conceptual thought functions to prepare the soil and harvest the fruits of the aesthetic seed experience--

thereby developing its moral, intellectual, and educational meaning. If, however, the distinction between the immediate apprehension of phenomena and its conceptual comprehension becomes so intensified--and even tense--as to segregate the intellect, then the result is to limit the full potential of the aesthetic as a means to educational growth. As we shall see in the next chapter, any program that focuses solely on the inherent value of immediate perceptual experience invites a critical response questioning the larger educational aim and purpose of such activities.

Yet the educational polarity resulting from such a bifurcated view of the aesthetic, that is, as separate from the intellect, can be seen clearly in the history of American schooling. The problem is illustrated, in part, by the early antagonism and continuing tension between the goals of a practical or vocational education and that of a liberal or cultural one. A liberal education generally refers to an intellectual and theoretical learning of art and culture; vocational education, on the other hand, signifies the practical, technical, or manual learning of a trade or profession. Interestingly enough, this split of pedagogical purpose is reflected in the educational writings of Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, two founding fathers of American democracy.<sup>12</sup>

Franklin proposed a specifically utilitarian goal for American education based on the teaching of useful and

practical subjects that could contribute to industry, commerce, and agriculture.<sup>13</sup> Jefferson also considered education a fundamental resource to the survival and growth of the young democracy. Unlike Franklin, however, Jefferson encouraged a sort of intellectual aristocracy of learning, which, although based on democratic access, cultivated literary scholarship and classical studies, and thereby preserved the liberal arts tradition of schooling.<sup>14</sup> It is quite significant, and another interesting historical fact, that the same pedagogical split was mirrored in the early part of this century by two founding fathers of Afro-American culture, namely, Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois. Dubois advocated a cultural education that emphasized the arts and literary scholarship, while Washington emphasized the need for a more practical, industrial type of learning.<sup>15</sup>

The problem of this social separation between a technical and a liberal learning still persists--as well as its problematic implications for developing aesthetic education. Etymologically, "aesthetic" education should be associated with vocational training because it usually involves manual skill, physical technique, and immediate, practical experience. Yet, ironically, such a schooling rarely emphasizes the inherent aesthetic quality, not to mention the intellectual value, of technical and vocational work. Rather, the idea of aesthetic education usually is associated more with learning the artistic heritage and

cultural artifacts embodied in a liberal arts education. Yet this type of schooling often is criticized as too formal, scholastic, and "academic," signifying a rather rote and anaesthetic program of teaching and learning. No wonder there is so much confusion and ambiguity as to the real meaning of aesthetic education!

Consequently, in contemporary American schooling there appears to be an alternating either/or approach that, like much of the "back to basics" reform, either views the aesthetic in schooling as impractical, or, as in the current call for a "cultural literacy," it elevates social artifacts as primary subject matter (while the method used to teach it may still promote a rather quantitative and mechanical learning).<sup>16</sup> Both extremes, again, dilute and devalue what a complete aesthetic education really stands for. Just as the aesthetic embodiment of art naturally is tied to any form of cultural learning, so too is an aesthetic attitude and perception (aisthetikos) intimately connected, as the Greeks understood, to techne, that is, to a vocational, technological, and technical training. A complete aesthetic education, then, would recover the balance and fullness of the aesthetic in experience; hence, it would combine the practical necessity of technical training with the cultural ideals of liberal learning, thereby also reuniting the split between theory and practice.



The tradition of a liberal arts education specifically is relevant to the present problem of meaning because, for many scholars and educators, an "aesthetic" education consists chiefly of the knowledge and appreciation of cultural artifacts, that is, objects of art and beauty. This tradition of cultural learning was reborn during the Italian Renaissance, when a classically inspired humanism (humanitas) renewed the ancient ideals of a liberal arts education.<sup>17</sup> It then came to signify knowledge of the artistic and cultural heritage of the past--forming the subject matter that today we call the Humanities. The chief method for this type of education, which dates back to the Greek Sophists, is literary scholarship, the study of "classic" texts and works of literature that then are seen as cultural artifacts in themselves.<sup>18</sup> The "Great Books" program of learning may be a modern manifestation of the same pedagogical impulse.<sup>19</sup>

One implication of all this is to point out that one of the biggest problems surrounding the meaning of aesthetic education concerns the relation between the definition of "art" with that of the "aesthetic" itself. Art commonly refers to the more external, productive and "objective" world of novels, paintings, plays, music, poems, and other concrete artifacts of appreciation and meaning. The aesthetic, on the other hand, usually connotes the more internal, intangible, and "subjective" process signifying the perception and interpretation of beauty, in forms both natural and artistic.

In an essay titled "Experience, Nature, and Art," Dewey traced this common conceptual distinction between art and the aesthetic back to the dualistic manner in which we traditionally have interpreted experience itself--that is, by distinguishing, and then falsely separating, an active, doing and conceiving phase in experience from a more passive, receptive and perceiving one.<sup>20</sup> Thus, the "artistic" signifies the active, creative construction or making of things, while the "aesthetic" indicates the vital appreciation of those art objects.

Although the relation between the artistic as the products and production of art and the aesthetic as its enjoyable perception initially may prove useful, it ultimately hinders the goal of this study. To begin with, the narrow association of the aesthetic only with "art" tends to restrict our vision of the aesthetic potential within practical, scientific, and intellectual activities. Furthermore, the rather mechanical relation of aesthetic appreciation to the products of art, like the opposite sides of a coin, leads to the peculiar notion that an "aesthetic" education signifies simply the personal appreciation of past "arti-facts," the objective facts of art or beauty. Such tangible products of creativity and culture (which usually are selected by "experts" rather than students themselves) then are studied solely for their inherent aesthetic value, while their social, historical, and intellectual value often remain undeveloped.

Ironically, such programs of "aesthetic" education can degenerate into a mere memorizing of art facts rather than a genuine understanding and appreciation for the experience of art. The underlying problem with such a mechanical view of the aesthetic in education is that it seems to neglect the context or method of teaching and learning artifacts--which can become anaesthetic if not attended to properly. Furthermore, so called "art appreciation" programs may fail to develop the genuine "work" of art, signifying the intellectual as well as moral activity of interpreting and recreating the products of art. For the practice of schooling, then, the full meaning of the aesthetic must be reconstructed to unify form and content, subject and object, creation and appreciation.

It also seems significant that the meaning of a liberal arts or cultural learning has reentered public discourse through two recent works in the philosophy of education. These books (both of which became popular bestsellers) are relevant to this study because they have a bearing on what an aesthetic education might stand for. In addition, the authors of both works cite Dewey's influence, for different reasons, as part of the present problem in schooling today! The first work that could be construed as a call for the renewal of aesthetic content in education is E.D. Hirsch's proposal for "cultural literacy," which suggests that a person who does not know the artifacts of our shared

cultural heritage cannot communicate and, hence, work effectively within the common culture.<sup>21</sup>

The concept of cultural literacy implies a fundamental relation between a culture and its aesthetically perceived forms of meaning and expression--its works of art. It is, after all, through art that culture largely is carried and created from generation to generation. The meaning of a "literacy" (or illiteracy) for culture also implies the duty of education to articulate, or to make literate, this vital link between art and culture. Thus, even though the author may not have intended it, the concept of cultural literacy easily can be brought to bear on the meaning of aesthetic education, and it also points to the social need for cultivating what has been called "aesthetic literacy."<sup>22</sup>

However, the problem with Hirsch's view is that he aims to acquaint students merely with the facts or subject matter of cultural tradition, in order to rectify the failure of our so called "content-neutral curriculum" (which he erroneously blames on Dewey).<sup>23</sup> The specific factual information seems to be the important thing, rather than the cultural contexts in which these names, places, ideas, and events first breathed and derived their rich meaning. This leads, then, to a pedagogical position stating that it is "neither wrong nor unnatural to teach young children adult information before they fully understand it."<sup>24</sup> Such a proposition risks reducing the inherent aesthetic quality of

genuine cultural literacy to an anaesthetic experience lacking meaning or motivation.

In other words, the notion that we can cultivate a real cultural learning by simply culling the content of specific ideas without ever having to engage directly the context--or even text--in which those ideas organically are embedded is dangerous. Bereft of the qualitative aesthetic context, the original source of meaning and expression, the obvious outcome is to create a quantitative list of names, dates, places, and other "facts" to test cultural literacy, which is exactly what the author did.<sup>25</sup> Again, the problem with this view of education as information (if not indoctrination) is precisely that it tends to reduce the organic meaning of literacy to a mechanical memorization of facts, even if those facts are related to art and culture.

The larger point here is that discussions of cultural and, by implication, artistic literacy often carry a limited meaning of the aesthetic, which then poses a grave problem for the development of aesthetic education. A genuine cultural literacy, one that can contribute to a complete and democratic aesthetic education, is not promoted through a quantitative indoctrination of facts, but rather through developing a qualitative appreciation for such forms of cultural meaning and expression. Only to the degree that this aesthetic disposition is nurtured does the study of culture--including its specific artifacts--become useful and, indeed, important

as a springboard for cultivating public discourse and intellectual inquiry. Put another way, there is an enormous difference between the measured (and easily testable) "knowledge" of cultural artifacts and the more qualitative understanding of their meaning and value; and, thus, our vision of aesthetic education, as well as the method of schooling used to reach it, will depend on which aim is chosen.

The other work that also could be interpreted as a call for renewing the aesthetic in education is Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind, which decries the numbing decline of moral and intellectual standards in American higher education.<sup>26</sup> Here the author argues for a return to the tradition of a liberal education based on the reading and appreciation of classic texts, those literary and philosophical works of art that embody and express the meaning and values of our cultural heritage. Such a method of learning, now in danger of becoming extinct, cultivates not only intellectual discipline and critical thinking, but, says Bloom, it also provides a degree of the moral and even spiritual nourishment so lacking in modern education. This renewal of a classical liberal arts learning (and, perhaps, a more effective cultural literacy) can be linked logically with the meaning of an aesthetic education as a way for literally "opening the American mind."

Yet the traditional danger with such book learning is that it remains dead and anaesthetic unless the wisdom of the past is translated effectively (by a good teacher) into the meanings of the present. As philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once observed, "The central problem of all education [is] the problem of keeping knowledge alive, of preventing it from becoming inert."<sup>27</sup> Thus, a genuinely liberating cultural education should not become merely a preservation of the status quo, for it also can explore and express new moral and intellectual as well as aesthetic values. Indeed, the artistic and intellectual heritage of students can remain vital and relevant only to the degree that the cultural tradition enters into present concerns and issues and interests.

The point here is that even Bloom's more penetrating analysis of cultural literacy (and its implied bearings on developing aesthetic education) is limited if it fails to recognize the felt needs and immediate aesthetic outlets of today's youth as the starting point from which to cultivate an appreciation for art and culture in general. If "art" is associated only with those artifacts of our own culture that have withstood the erosion of time and criticism, then the meaning of aesthetic education also will become frozen and restricted. Certainly, as Bloom has argued (not unlike Plato did more than two thousand years ago), there are negative consequences for the psyche as well as the society resulting

from the degeneration of serious art into popular commercial entertainment. Yet, merely to disdain the prevailing youthful passion for rock music, as Bloom has done, in contrast to the enduring values of "real" art, is to underestimate both the aesthetic potential of the young and that of their forms of expression.<sup>28</sup>

Perhaps even more importantly, Bloom's response seems unsuited for the aims of a democratic society and its method of education. For example, to cultivate an aesthetic cultural appreciation, Bloom would deny students their passion for, say, MTV and instead force feed them Mozart. Such a pedagogy rests on an authoritative meaning of "art," which if used to define an aesthetic education would be a grave error. Since art signifies present processes as well as past artifacts, the better social and educational solution would be to indicate how the current aesthetic impulses of the young, manifested in their attraction to commercial music, movies, and so forth, could be transformed intelligently into the appreciation and understanding of other, more serious and enduring, art forms. In this way a continuity, rather than a separation, could be established between the present, still forming aesthetic expressions of youth and those past works of art that constitute the tradition of Western culture and liberal education.

Therefore, to be complete, any program of aesthetic education that includes the study of art must connect the



artifacts of the past with the aesthetic expressions of the present, and it must link the personal process of enjoying art with its social products and consequences. American culture with its rapid change and technology is vastly different than it was even a generation ago. For most students today, the traditional aesthetic forms of the past, to be meaningfully experienced, first must be developed from and connected to the common artistic appreciations of the immediate present, even if these present "popular" forms of art do not quite measure up to the lofty standards of days gone by. If we simply criticize and deny the genuine, though immature, aesthetic manifestations of the young without patiently connecting that impulse to the great past works of art--those that can, indeed, serve a deeper educational function--then the result is often a futile attempt to force the classics full blown onto an unprepared sensibility that inevitably will rebel against such dead weight.

In summary, this discussion is intended to signify that however we choose to define (or merely imply) the meaning of art, it will determine the way we develop an aesthetic education. The point is that the theoretical problem of meaning always affects the practical problem of pedagogy; in fact, this is the underlying theme of the chapter. The way art or the aesthetic is defined and delimited influences the way we go about teaching and learning it. For example, how should the aesthetic values and works of art expressed in

nonWestern cultures influence the way we develop aesthetic education in American schools? Also, if a liberal education is based on the intelligent understanding and artistic appreciation of cultural tradition, then how do we incorporate the principle of integration in a manner that brings that tradition into our own present day lives? Only through such inquiry can we revitalize the deeper meaning of a "liberal" education as a vitally liberating and, hence, aesthetic experience that frees us from the bonds of ignorance and prejudice.

#### Aesthetic Theory--Problems for Philosophy

Both of the works cited above carry assumptions that limit the potential of the aesthetic in education. Yet this limited potential of the aesthetic within educational practice mirrors the larger social and philosophic problems of aesthetic inquiry. As mentioned in the last chapter, the perspective of each school within modern philosophy contributes something to this study; however, each also contributes to the problem of definition because each perspective somewhat limits the full use and significance of the aesthetic. Hence, it would be useful here to indicate how the meaning of the aesthetic has been researched in general philosophic theory.

Existentialism, one of the most profound and influential currents of twentieth century thought, clearly has emphasized the role of art, creativity, and the aesthetic for

the meaning and significance of human experience. Nietzsche, a pioneer of modern existentialism, based the core of his philosophy around a uniquely aesthetic interpretation and justification of life itself.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the existential perspective has helped to redefine the aesthetic as more than merely beauty or even art--to indicate a process that can heal the alienation, despair, or boredom that might "an-aesthetize" us from knowing ourselves and the world. Since teaching and learning thrive in a vital aesthetic atmosphere (and are suffocated in an anaesthetic one), this perspective obviously is related to education and schooling.<sup>30</sup> Art in education thus plays a central role in the modern existentialist concern for developing individual awareness and responsibility.

Sprouting from European soil, existentialism never quite flowered in America, but it has been transported in the hybrid form of humanistic psychology. The pioneers of humanistic psychology, including those who applied it to schooling, seem to have been influenced by existential philosophy. It is no coincidence, then, that Abraham Maslow described the fulfillment of "aesthetic needs" as necessary for self-actualization, and he also characterized the "peak experience" as inherently aesthetic; consequently, Maslow concluded that an "Education-Through-Art" is the best method for actualizing human potential.<sup>31</sup> Other humanistic psychologists, such as Carl Rogers, further have emphasized the duty of education to stimulate "creativity" and so provide

for the opportunity of aesthetic experience.<sup>32</sup> This existential and humanistic perspective has enlarged the meaning of the aesthetic as a fundamental value in life as well as in education. However, the point to make is that a problem with this perspective is that it often is vague. Proposals for aesthetic growth, human creativity, and so forth, frequently lack the specific pragmatic indications--and the focus--needed to apply this valuable attitude to the actual concrete methods and aims of schooling.

The other pillar of modern European philosophy is phenomenology. The term "phenomenology," as already noted, is derived from the Greek word phenomena which refers to the changing and transient world of nature--that which is revealed through aisthesis or concrete sensory impressions. Thus, by its very name, phenomenology signifies a philosophical perspective that is tied inextricably to the realm of aesthetic perception. Pioneering phenomenologists like Merleau-Ponty have helped to redefine aesthetic experience, analyzing and reevaluating the fundamental act of perception itself.<sup>33</sup> Modern phenomenologists emphasize the importance of the immediacy of experience, thereby illuminating its aesthetic quality and also signifying the value of artistic creation as well as perception.

Interestingly enough, to the ancient Greek philosophers the realm of phenomena represented the impermanent and, hence, illusory world of art and nature over

against the more abstract and "real" world of reason and ideas. Modern phenomenology, in contrast, reverses this evaluation and focuses on the reality and worth of our immediately lived aesthetic sensations, which can become distorted through the mediation of rational analysis. As mentioned earlier, this perspective often leads to proposals for aesthetic education based chiefly on the training for direct sensory awareness, without conceptual interference. Thus, although phenomenology has contributed much toward the modern reevaluation of art and aesthetic experience, the pedagogical problem with such a view is that it often ignores and even denies the role of reflective thinking in the cultivation of the aesthetic in education.

Finally, the Anglo-American school of analytic philosophy has its own contribution to make toward the meaning of the aesthetic, especially in its attempt to resolve the problems of philosophic communication resulting from the often abstruse and inaccessible style in which philosophy is expressed. Indeed, the degree of conceptual clarity (or confusion) surrounding the idea of the aesthetic as it is examined within philosophy inevitably will affect how it is applied to education. Lack of focus is a real problem when it comes to contemporary discussions of the meaning of the aesthetic, so conceptual clarity is crucial in order to use that understanding in the process and practice of schooling. Consequently, a leading analytic philosopher, responding to

the confusing and even superficial discussions of the aesthetic and its implications for education, has demanded a new, clearer meaning and "a less simple minded approach."<sup>34</sup>

Analytic or linguistic philosophy has shown that in order to communicate effectively we must, so to speak, say what we mean in order to mean what we say. The activity of conceptual criticism and clarification thus emphasizes the logic and meaning of language. This uniquely cognitive perspective characterizes the pioneering work of Suzanne Langer who also has redefined art as a "nondiscursive language" of symbolic meanings that follows its own grammar and logic.<sup>35</sup> Other analytic philosophers have turned their highly technical linguistic focus to the clarification of aesthetic concepts such as the meaning of artistic "beauty" in, say, sport and physical education.<sup>36</sup>

One problem, ironically, is that such analytic discussions of the aesthetic often are so dryly technical as to lack any artistic quality in their style of expression.<sup>37</sup> The point is that the way in which a philosophy of art is expressed functions, to a certain degree, to embody the meaning and value of its content. After all, writing is a creative act, and even academic philosophic writing carries the potential work of art. Hence, the aim of any aesthetic inquiry is best achieved through a tempered passion and poetry that transforms theory into the practice of art.

In conclusion, the general philosophic problem of meaning is that the aesthetic either is too simply and vaguely defined, or it is reduced to a special function somehow opposed to logic and intelligence. Analytic philosophy has helped to focus the meaning of art as well as demonstrate its cognitive character. However, another problem with linguistic philosophy is that its highly technical approach often is used very narrowly. Such analyses focus so much on concepts and meanings that they lose sight of the larger implications for human conduct and social reform. The difficulty may reside more in the assumptions of those who employ the method than in the method itself.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, linguistic philosophy seems less concerned with philosophy in action, as if the analysis of meaning had no consequences in daily life. Linguistic analysis falls short if, after refining the concept of the aesthetic, it fails to implement that idea within social practice by suggesting, for example, its educational consequences. The pragmatic use of philosophy, then, is fundamental in order to indicate the full meaning of the aesthetic, for that meaning remains hollow and abstract unless it is incorporated into social conduct. Indeed, the concept of the aesthetic will affect the way it is used and enacted in practice; hence, it also suggests an ethical function and moral meaning for art.

Notes:

1. Allan Ornstein and Daniel Levine, An Introduction to the Foundations of Education, 3d ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985), p. 187.
2. Oxford English Dictionary, vol. 1, ed. by J. Murray, H. Bradley, W. Craigie, and C. Onions (Oxford, U.K.: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 147-148. The modern use of the word "aesthetic," connoting beauty or artistry, originated in Germany around 1750 where it was applied to standards of artistic taste and beauty. This new meaning appeared in England after 1830 and gained popular acceptance (despite the earlier protest by Kant and others that the word be returned to its etymological and philosophical origin denoting sense perception).
3. John Dewey, Logic: The Theory of Inquiry (New York: Holt, 1938), pp. 60-80. Dewey reinterpreted the ancient split between the aesthetic and the intellect as a false social division between the qualitative "common-sense" world of experience--signifying those practical, immediate, and, hence, aesthetic sensations that we hold in common--and the more quantitative, theoretical world of "science" and reflective inquiry.
4. Ibid., p. 79.
5. See C.M. Bowra, Classical Greece (New York: Time-Life Books, 1965), for a general introduction to the culture of ancient Greece.
6. John Dewey, "Affective Thought in Logic and Painting" (1926), in John Dewey on Education, ed. by R.D. Archambault (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 148.
7. Dewey, Logic: The Theory of Inquiry, pp. 72-73.
8. See also John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy (New York: Holt, 1920), pp. 1-28, for another discussion of this theme.
9. Cf. John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916), pp. 329-331: "It is suggestive that European philosophy originated (among the Athenians) under the direct pressure of educational questions. . . . The fact that the stream of European philosophical thought arose as a theory of educational procedure remains an eloquent witness to the intimate connection of philosophy and education. . . . The most penetrating definition of



philosophy which can be given is, then, that it is the theory of education in its most general phases."

10. Wellington Madenfort, "Aesthetic Education: An Education for the Immediacy of Sensuous Experience," Art Education, vol. 25, no. 5 (May 1972), 10-14. See also Wellington Madenfort, A Phenomenology of the Esthetic and Art Education (Ed.D. dissertation: Pennsylvania State University, 1965).
11. John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934), p. 121.
12. Robert Ulich, History of Educational Thought, rev. ed. (New York: American Book Company, 1968), pp. 225-257.
13. Ibid., p. 237. The title of Franklin's early essay on education, "Proposal for Promoting Useful Knowledge among the British Plantations in America" (1743), reveals his concern for a pedagogy of technical training. It is also worth noting that the American Philosophical Society issued from Franklin's "Proposal" concerning education; the connection between philosophy and education has a long tradition in America.
14. Ibid., pp. 247-249. Jefferson's "Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge" (1779) as well as his "Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education" (1817) reveal his deep concern for a democratic system of public schooling--despite the fact that nothing resulted from either bill. His influence on higher education was more apparent: he was founder, architect, and first president of the University of Virginia.
15. Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, & Co., 1978; orig. pub. 1935), pp. 288-309.
16. See A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1983). Concerned by the "rising tide of mediocrity" in American schooling, the report called for a new "back to basics" initiative (adding computer literacy to language, mathematics, and science) so that Americans will have the technical skills necessary to compete economically with other countries. For an example of school reform based on a renewed content for cultural learning, see E.D. Hirsch Jr., Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).

17. See Sem Dresden, Humanism in the Renaissance, trans. by M. King (New York: World University Library, 1968). The seven liberal arts taught in the medieval universities were derived from the ancient "trivium" of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, plus the "quadrivium" of geometry, mathematics, astronomy, and music.
18. See H.I. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity, trans. by G. Lamb (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982; orig. pub. 1948), pp. 46-60. In the Hellenistic era, the literary (as well as moral) study of the "classics" became codified and even canonized.
19. See Great Books of the Western World, ed. by Robert Maynard Hutchins (London: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952); and Mortimer Adler and Peter Wolff, A General Introduction to the Great Books and to a Liberal Education (London: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1959).
20. John Dewey, "Experience, Nature, and Art" (1925), in John Dewey on Education, ed. by R.D. Archambault (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), 157-165.
21. E.D. Hirsch Jr., Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).
22. Maxine Greene, "Aesthetic Literacy in General Education," in Philosophy and Education: Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, vol. 1, ed. by J. Soltis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 114-141.
23. Hirsch, Cultural Literacy, pp. xv, 19. Dewey, of course, never proposed a "content-free" curriculum and would have considered such a thing absurd. At a time when education focused almost exclusively on subject matter, and when certain subjects like mathematics and Latin were deemed to train intelligence automatically, Dewey simply pointed out that the method of instruction (which meant appealing to the interest and experience of the student) was equally important. A careful reading of Dewey's work shows that he never argued that content was unimportant; rather he showed that there was a wider range of subject matter that could train intelligence. In fact, in Democracy and Education, Dewey showed that schooling must integrate specific content with effective method; thus, he devoted entire chapters to explaining the importance of history, geography, science, and the arts--which obviously are specific curriculum contents--in the process of education. For further discussions of Hirsch's misunderstanding of Dewey, see William Proefriedt, "If Dewey Could Answer Hirsch," and Robert R. Sherman, "Better Men are Victims,"

in Proceedings of the Forty-fourth Annual Meeting of the Philosophy of Education Society (Illinois State University: The Philosophy of Education Society, 1988), pp. 229-237 and 238-242.

24. Hirsch, Cultural Literacy, pp. xvi-xvii.
25. See Ibid., pp. 152-215, "An Appendix: What Literate Americans Know--A Preliminary List." See also E.D. Hirsch Jr., Joseph Kett, and James Trefil, The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988). Ironically, Hirsch does acknowledge the danger in such a uniform, checklist approach to education (Hirsch, Cultural Literacy, pp. 142-143).
26. Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).
27. Alfred North Whitehead, The Aims of Education and Other Essays (New York: The Free Press, 1929), p. 5.
28. See Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind, pp. 68-81. In his interesting chapter on music and its relation to today's students, Bloom refers to the present popular explosion of MTV and states (p. 74) that "nothing noble, sublime, profound, delicate, tasteful, or even decent can find a place in such tableaux. There is room only for the intense, changing, crude, and immediate . . . character of democratic art . . . ." Now while it does appear that many music videos are sensational and perhaps even vulgar, Bloom seems unaware that there are artists who have used the creative integration of music and visual image as a synaesthetic form that enriches both mediums--not unlike what Walt Disney did with the classic animated film "Fantasia." These MTV artists, although a minority, have created works not only decent and tasteful but arguably sublime and noble, and to lump their work with the lowest common denominator unfairly minimizes the potential of the aesthetic medium--as well as that of art in a democracy.
29. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy (1872), trans. by W. Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967). Nietzsche wrote this, his first book, as a brilliant iconoclastic treatise on the meaning and function of art. In the introduction he wrote that art represents "the highest task and truly metaphysical activity" of this life, and he proposed a radically new "aesthetic interpretation and justification of the world" in order to transform natural human passions and impulses into art. Not coincidentally, Nietzsche found in Greek drama, dance, music, and ritual the embodiment of this spiritual/aesthetic celebration of

life; hence, he later developed the concept of the "Dionysian" person as symbolizing the creative employment of passion through art. Schooling, then, can function to cultivate a vital aesthetic education, or it can condition a conforming "herd mentality" of personal numbness and social mediocrity. For an example of the idea of the aesthetic (and the anaesthetic) in his later work, see Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols (1889), trans. by R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1968).

30. See, for example, Existential Encounters for Teachers, ed. by Maxine Greene (New York: Random House, 1967); John Naples, "Existentialism and Aesthetic Education," Music Educators Journal, Vol. 57 (1971), 26-29; and E.F. Kaelin, "The Existential Grounds for Aesthetic Experience," Studies in Art Education, vol. 8, no.1 (1966), 3-12.
31. Abraham Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature (New York: Penguin Books, 1971), pp. 55, 101. For an auxiliary discussion relating Dewey's work with that of Maslow, see L. Dennis and J.F. Powers, "Dewey, Maslow, and Consummatory Experience," Journal of Aesthetic Education, vol. 8, no. 4 (Oct. 1974), 51-63.
32. Carl Rogers, "Towards a Theory of Creativity," in Creativity and its Cultivation, ed. by H. Anderson (New York: Harper, 1959), 69-82.
33. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception, trans. by C. Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962).
34. Nelson Goodman, "Art and the Understanding: The Need for a Less Simple Minded Approach," Music Educators Journal, vol. 58 (1972), 43-45, 85-88. For a fuller treatment of this linguistic analysis approach to art, see Nelson Goodman, Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976).
35. Suzanne Langer, Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942). See also June Edwards, "Suzanne Langer: The Arts and Education," Journal of Thought, vol. 19 (Summer 1984), 95-102.
36. See David Best, Philosophy and Human Movement (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978); and L.A. Reid, "Sport, the Aesthetic, and Art," British Journal of Educational Studies, vol. 18, no. 3 (Oct. 1970), 245-258.

37. See Brand Blanshard, On Philosophical Style (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954). Philosophy consists not only of what is said but also how it is said; thus, it has both content and form. It is the responsibility, then, of philosophers to write well as well as to think well.
38. See John Wilson, Thinking With Concepts (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1963). For a discussion of the limitations of modern linguistic philosophy, see "What (If Anything) To Expect from Today's Philosophers," Time, 7 January 1966, 29-34.

CHAPTER 3  
PROBLEMS OF VALUE AND PURPOSE:  
THE RELATION OF THE AESTHETIC TO THE MORAL

Art is the great stimulus to life: how could it be  
thought purposeless, aimless, art for art's sake?  
Friedrich Nietzsche

Within the discipline of philosophy, aesthetic inquiry and ethics traditionally are grouped together under the term "axiology," the study of values.<sup>1</sup> The relation of morals, that is, standards of value and conduct, to art and aesthetic experience was another idea first developed in Greek philosophy. The ancient Greek ideal--and educational aim--of kalos/agathos (uniting the concept for beauty with appropriate moral conduct) indicated this natural connection between aesthetic principles and ethical values.<sup>2</sup> However, the Greek association of beauty and virtue raises a philosophic problem that still exists: how does art affect thought and conduct, and how do aesthetic experiences create and convey moral values?

The question is not merely academic, for the connection between art and morality is an obvious public concern. Just recently there has been a loud outcry over the use of public funds to finance works of art that some people consider to be offensive and even obscene.<sup>3</sup> Parents,

teachers, and politicians increasingly are concerned about the way in which the values portrayed in popular art forms such as movies, music, and television affect the ideas and actions of American youth.<sup>4</sup> Thus, some civic and religious groups attempt to regulate popular art forms like rock music and MTV. In fact, a court judge in Florida recently determined the music of a certain "rap" group to be obscene, banning the performance and sale of such music.<sup>5</sup>

Of course there is more than a little resistance to any type of artistic "censorship" because of our democratic sensibility as well as the Constitutional guarantee of free expression. However, the peculiar fact is that works of art still are being censored from American schools. One Florida county school board, for example, recently banned certain passages of Aristophanes and Chaucer from a high school humanities textbook on the grounds that such poetry is morally offensive.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, the idea that poetry carries moral consequences for schooling is not new; the debate over the ethical significance of art for education and society dates back to Plato, who criticized the art forms of his own day for their moral as well as pedagogical content.<sup>7</sup>

Plato argued that aesthetic experience could divert the soul (psyche) from its "higher" nature by appealing to sense and instinct alone, and thus he warned of the moral potency of music and poetry. It is an interesting testament to Plato's foresight that many of today's popular forms of

entertainment attract the same serious criticism, namely of psychologically exploiting sex and violence and catering to human appetite rather than reason. Many products of art today, both commercial and professional, do seem to be increasingly "sense-ationalized," provoking an immediate visceral reaction to the sensual or grotesque for example. At an extreme, such works often are labelled obscene or "immoral"; thus, at the other extreme, people appeal to "morality" in order to regulate strict control over all forms of aesthetic expression. Obviously, then, the idea of the aesthetic--which denotes art as well as sensation--bears directly on the practice of ethics and the moral aims of education.

### The Aesthetic as Social Value

The idea and practice of the aesthetic is rooted in its social value. The problem of aesthetic value derives, in part, from the culturally conditioned ways we have come to "evaluate" manual, physical, and sensuous experiences. Such genuinely aesthetic activities, in an etymological sense, commonly are undervalued and depreciated when compared to spiritual or intellectual values. Moreover, the social problem of value has a logical root--namely, the way in which the aesthetic, as sensuous and concrete, has been cut off from the abstract, symbolic mediation of reason or intellect. This problematic split (which will be discussed further in the next chapter) emerges from the fact that the aesthetic signifies an



immediate perceptual, rather than conceptual, experience.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the idea of aesthetic immediacy has been a recurrent theme in modern philosophy.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, the concrete character of the aesthetic in experience (signifying the immediate aspect of, say, listening to music or watching a sunset) accounts much for the way in which the aesthetic is evaluated, or devaluated.

To return to the source of the problem, the social value of the aesthetic today grew out of the ancient Greek world that consciously prized the aesthetic, as well as reason, in all aspects of living. As noted earlier, the very idea of aisthetikos arose from the Greek social need to distinguish the more reflective role of theory and thought from the common, practical, and technical experience of "aesthetic" sensory perception, which characterized the production of art and craft. The point is that the original Greek philosophic distinction between aesthetic practice and theoretical inquiry reflected not only a logical division but also carried a separation of social value that still remains. The manual laboring class of artisans, craftsmen, and other workers were discriminated from the ruling, intellectual class of philosophers, poets, and priests.<sup>10</sup> Thus, the "lower" social class of physical laborers, those engaged in the aesthetic perception and manipulation of materials, was segregated further from the "upper" aristocratic class, who, as Aristotle noted, had the necessary leisure time to devote

to philosophy, science, and other more theoretical pursuits.<sup>11</sup>

Historically, then, aesthetic activities, dependent on the role of body and sense, were divorced both socially and (epistemo)logically from the supposedly more "pure" intellectual activity of theory and contemplation.<sup>12</sup> Hence, the classical meaning of aesthetic practice, as distinct from theoretical inquiry, carries over into our own day where those people who, as we would say, work with their heads seem to be more highly esteemed, if not better paid, than those who work with their hands. In other words, the literal aesthetic occupations of body and sense, including those of a farmer, mechanic, carpenter, or "blue-collar" worker, somehow seem denied the dignity and status automatically given to a professional or "white-collar" executive. (Athletes of course are notable exceptions; yet the high value placed on their physical, "kin-aesthetic" skills usually is isolated from the appreciation of their intellect and character, which indicates that the split still remains.)

Furthermore, the same social and economic factors that depreciate most vocational aesthetic occupations today also serve to inflate "art-ificially" the value of those who succeed in the performing fine arts (such as movie or rock "stars"). The irony that an unrecognized artist in our culture can, almost overnight, become a wealthy celebrity helps to illustrate the moralizing extremes in which we

socially view the aesthetic--that is, either depreciated as merely physical and mundane, or inflated and imitated in the guise of rare talent and genius. Consequently, the modern fragmentation of the aesthetic into its "practical" versus "creative" forms presents yet another social problem of value.

In this context, it is worth repeating that the ancient Greeks did not separate what we distinguish today as the more "fine" arts from the practical and vocational crafts. Both were judged to be genuine aesthetic activities and forms of techne that signified a logical method or technique. The sculptor and shoemaker were alike in that each engaged in an intelligently guided aesthetic method aimed at creating some socially useful product. However, the problem today is that "fine art" has been put on a pedestal, so to speak, while the aesthetic value of the vocational "crafts" generally has been depreciated. Thus, in much of schooling only the talented elite or "gifted" are encouraged to pursue music, painting, and so on, while vocational training sometimes is seen as the proper destiny for students who lack academic success.

The larger point here is that the ancient Greek social distinction between occupations of aesthetic labor and theoretical leisure has had significant, and adverse, consequences for the entire course of Western schooling.<sup>13</sup> Schooling is fundamentally a social activity, and thus it always reflects the values of the society in which it

functions. Hence, the traditional social distinction between aesthetic and intellectual activities has limited education by bifurcating the aims of schooling. The distinction and its consequent division of values has resulted specifically in two separate types of education: technical or vocational learning, on the one side, and a liberal arts or cultural learning on the other.

Thus today we have a system of schooling that, by and large, appears to funnel students without the means or motivation to pursue a "higher" education into programs of vocational training (if they have not already dropped out of school). Of course society needs such occupations to be filled; but the problem is that the training is so overly technical that it often ignores the intellectual, moral, and even aesthetic consequences of such work. On the other side, the traditional college liberal arts education now seems to be either sacrificed at the altar of professional specialization or reduced to a rote "academic" learning that does not emphasize its relevant application to practical activities and daily life.

Despite the fact that the split between liberal and vocational schooling originated in the classic pedagogical conflict between Socrates and the Sophists, Greek education as a whole integrated intellectual discipline with aesthetic expression and always was aimed toward some definite moral and social purpose.<sup>14</sup> Dewey pointed out that, in contrast,

modern culture has taken the division between practical aims and intellectual method (itself based on an assumed dualism) and has created a pedagogical split that fragments not only the social system but also the individuals who comprise the society.

The result is a [school] system in which both "cultural" and "utilitarian" subjects exist in an inorganic composite where the former are not by dominant purpose socially serviceable and the latter not liberative of imagination or thinking power. . . . Hence the split between inner mental action and outer physical action of which the traditional distinction between the liberal and the utilitarian is the reflex.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, Dewey concluded that an education which could "unify the disposition of the members of society would do much to unify society itself."<sup>16</sup> However, the problem cannot be solved as long as there continues to be an epistemological division of thinking from sensing, which then promotes the fragmentation in educational practice of art from science, and of aesthetic means from intellectual outcomes. In social as well as educational terms, the division also perpetuates a "lower class" of vocational training and physical occupations in contrast to an "upper class" of liberal learning and intellectual pursuits; the division may even reinforce discrimination by gender.<sup>17</sup> The present system of schooling, in turn, perpetuates both the class division and the philosophical split.

### The Aesthetic as Body and Sense--Moral Implications

Associated with the body in its sensuous and sensual energies, the aesthetic historically has been devalued in Western culture. The Greek (socio)logical distinction between the aesthetic and the intellect became, under the influence of Judeo-Christian thought, a fixed moral division between the spiritual realm of rational contemplation over against the carnal, corrupt realm of physical existence. Thus, the traditional philosophic split between body and mind has fueled an attitude that elevates reason, while depreciating body and sense. The distinction has left a legacy of negative consequences for society and schooling by devaluing the aesthetic as irrational and even imposing a certain "immoral" status upon it.<sup>18</sup>

Yet the Greeks themselves had no concept of original sin; ethos signified a level of consciousness or character rather than "morals" as we understand them. Thus, Nietzsche argued that Greek art and culture were not simply the epitome of rational clarity and calm proportion (which was the traditional interpretation), but rather had achieved their greatness through the thoughtful transformation of essentially erotic energies and physical passions.<sup>19</sup> Greece had become a great culture, setting an enduring social ideal, because it had realized through its art, religion, philosophy, and education a harmonious balance between the natural human

tension of body and spirit, passion and reason, the aesthetic and the intellect.<sup>20</sup>

Ironically, perhaps the fundamental problem of Western philosophy (as well as theology) has been to reduce the organic Greek gestalt of sensual and spiritual qualities, which unifies the psyche as well as the cosmos, into a formal separation. The result is a sort of dual universe that inevitably elevates one quality above the other. Such a paradigm ignores the fundamental Greek principle of balance or harmony, which Plato described as one of the four virtues that can be realized in individual conduct as well as in the social order.<sup>21</sup> However, the traditional Western dualism between sense and thought or body and spirit (as well as its theological translation into sin and salvation) can be traced, as some of the early Church fathers demonstrated, back to an interpretation of Greek philosophy--especially the work of Plato himself!<sup>22</sup>

Indeed, Plato's philosophy had distinguished the visible, transient, and, thus for the Greeks, illusory world of both sensory experience (aisthesis) and natural phenomena from the more permanent and "real" world of logos, ideas, and knowledge (episteme) that can be grasped only through the intellect. Formal logic (mis)interprets this distinction as a mechanical division separating sense from reason and pitting the natural world against the spiritual one.<sup>23</sup> Yet although Plato built his metaphysics and epistemology on the

distinction between the aesthetic and the intellect, his genius was to develop the organic and dynamic relation between the two realms.<sup>24</sup> Thus, while Plato showed that passion and perception can mislead reason and enslave the soul, he also indicated that when used correctly aesthetic impulses literally can lead the soul to the comprehension of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness.<sup>25</sup>

Nonetheless, a medieval monastic philosophy took up the idea of an irreconcilable split between matter and spirit and consequently devalued the aesthetic and all that it signified--namely, the processes of nature and the functions of the body, including the role of sense perception, emotion, and sex. Because the process and perception of art obviously is associated with all that the aesthetic implies, its cultivation was undervalued compared to scholastic reason or contemplation, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that works of art helped to "school" the illiterate medieval masses.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the moral and aesthetic value of Greek physical education (gymnastice) was all but abandoned by a monastic schooling that focused on book learning.<sup>27</sup>

The gist of all of this is to point out that the moral (as well as immoral) potential of art and the aesthetic is an idea rooted in an historical and collective heritage. In the last book of the Republic, after showing that art has a profound influence on human conduct and values, Plato did recommend the strict regulation and even censorship of certain



forms of poetry and music for the social good.<sup>28</sup> It is a telling irony that Plato's own dialogues are recognized today as enduring works of art, valued as much for their literary poetic style as their profound philosophic content! Furthermore, modern writers continue to cite Plato as the founder of the very idea of aesthetic education.<sup>29</sup> Significantly, then, Plato's apparent ban on the poets and rather autocratic control of the arts has enormous implications for the meaning of an aesthetic education in a democratic society such as our own.<sup>30</sup>

Since the aim of this study is toward integration, rather than a shift from one extreme to another, one problem with the general historical devaluation of the aesthetic is the opposite tendency to exaggerate art as a panacea for the failures of rationalism. In this century we are in particular danger of this pendulum shift by reversing the value of the aesthetic in relation to reason. An example of the shift, along with its overly specialized focus, can be seen in modern philosophy itself. The early Greek nature philosophers were engaged in the "scientific" investigation of phenomena and physics, but modern phenomenologists demonstrate how conceptual thinking actually can obstruct their research.<sup>31</sup> The Greek tragic dramas (of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripedes) were perhaps the first rational, artistic forms of existential philosophy, posing profound human questions and dilemmas; modern existentialism, in contrast, often focuses

more on the "irrational" in experience.<sup>32</sup> And even though Plato's dramatic dialogues set the method of linguistic analysis in a poetic form that questioned the meaning of concepts like beauty and virtue (as well as their social and ethical function), modern analytic philosophers seem never to speculate or explain beyond the technical definitions with which they wrestle.<sup>33</sup>

The history of philosophy as a whole also reveals a series of alternating swings between the method of rational idealism, emphasizing abstract logic and universal principles, and that of an empiricism based on sensory experience and direct observation.<sup>34</sup> In the study of art history too the swing (and the dualism) is between artistic "classicism" with its cool rational order and logic of composition and a "romanticism" that is characterized by emotional passion and spontaneity.<sup>35</sup> The point is that the aesthetic still is viewed from one extreme or another, that is, either undervalued or overvalued in relation to the intellect. This pendulum principle also affects education. Even in art education the current debate centers around whether schooling should emphasize the immediate aesthetic experience of creating art or a more rational "discipline-based" study of its meaning and value.<sup>36</sup>

Historically, then, the tendency has been to oscillate between the two extremes. Thus, one problem for renewing the aesthetic in education is correcting the attitude that

separates and devalues (or overvalues) the aesthetic in relation to the intellect. When translated to schooling, the moral problem of aesthetic value asks first whether the arts and aesthetic activities are valued at all as significant for teaching and learning! Indeed, at the one extreme, such activities frequently are viewed as mere "frills" that are of minor importance to the development of intelligence and character. For example, the conservative "back to basics" reform movement usually gives little or no attention to the role of art and aesthetic activities as a "basic" resource for reaching the aims of schooling.<sup>37</sup>

Dewey noted that such a limited conception of education usually will justify creative activities in school only as "a grudging concession to the necessity of having occasional relief from the strain of constant intellectual work."<sup>38</sup> This type of pedagogical position generally dismisses the aesthetic in schooling as frivolous and uneducative. Hence, apart from the refinement of mere technical skill, the arts often are considered a secondary branch of the curriculum. Moreover, after the elementary school level, students in such programs often are seen as an elite or "talented" minority, the only ones encouraged to continue practice and study of the arts. This attitude notoriously undervalues the potential contribution of aesthetic processes and products for all students.

At the other extreme, reacting to the present failure of schooling, aesthetic activities sometimes are viewed idealistically as the panacea for educational ills, without a clear indication of how they are to be effectively used as intelligently guided methods aimed at specific goals.<sup>39</sup> In response to more conservative educational reforms, there are some eloquent proposals that decry the lack of aesthetic activities in schooling and argue for their inclusion.<sup>40</sup> But such positions represent "holistic" education only narrowly if the idea of artistic or creative (or even "right-brain") learning is employed as an end in itself, as an entertaining activity that lacks a sense of structure and outcome. This type of pedagogical attitude, as Dewey again noted, easily degenerates into

an enthusiastic belief in the almost magical educative efficacy of any kind of activity, granted it is an activity and not a passive absorption of academic and theoretic material. The conceptions of play, of self-expression, of natural growth, are appealed to almost as if they meant that almost any kind of spontaneous activity inevitably secures the desired or desirable training of mental power.<sup>41</sup>

After the ethical value of the aesthetic has been depreciated for so long, we are in particular danger of this pendulum shift at the present time. The contemporary moral reevaluation of the aesthetic is reflected in the fact that many modern philosophers of art have emphasized its unique ethical import.<sup>42</sup> Yet this moral reconstruction of the value of art, so reminiscent of the Greeks, also can degenerate into either vague formulations or rigid dogmas that then can be

used to restrict the role of the aesthetic in a free democratic society. Without a clear idea of how art functions as a moral activity and what its purpose is, aesthetic experience cannot contribute to moral education.

Consequently, perhaps the best way to clarify the value and meaning of the aesthetic is to indicate the effects (moral and otherwise) of the "anaesthetic."<sup>43</sup> It is a numbing anaesthesia--not common activities or intellectual thought--that constitutes the real antithesis of the aesthetic. Indeed, the aesthetic resides potentially in all lived activities, especially practical and educational ones. In schooling as in life, it is the extreme of rigid routine on one side and aimless incoherence on the other that makes experience deadening, inert, and anaesthetic. Thus, the Greeks invoked the "doctrine of the mean," a sense of balanced proportion, to designate aesthetic as well as ethical virtue.<sup>44</sup> The anaesthetic signifies the imbalance, a sterilization of conscious and compassionate action. And if the anaesthetic signifies that which numbs or deadens us to ourselves and the world, then the aesthetic in experience can function to clarify and focus the meaning of our lives and values. To be anaesthetized to our own experience and to the experience of others represents the insensitivity that inhibits all educational development--moral, social, and intellectual. This insensitivity seems to characterize much of modern life and schooling.

### The Purpose of the Aesthetic in Schooling and Society

Without a clear understanding of its pragmatic function, art cannot contribute fully to the moral aims of education--aims that schools increasingly are being called upon to address in connection with present social problems linked to drugs, delinquency, teenage pregnancy, and so on. The aesthetic not only has value, but it carries and constructs value as well. In other words, art exercises both an ethical and a practical function, for ethics has meaning only when put into practice! After demonstrating the inherent value of the aesthetic, a further problem, then, is to define the purpose or aim of such values.

The contemporary notion of aesthetic purpose is epitomized succinctly by the phrase "art for art's sake." This modern concept (which would have been foreign to ancient cultures) commonly is taken to signify the intrinsic or inherent value in the work of art itself. The idea took root around the end of the nineteenth century when the European pioneers of modern painting began to produce more "abstract" works that deviated from the traditional standards of art based on the representation of the natural world.<sup>45</sup> Nietzsche, who was living during this immense revolution in art, responded to the new aesthetic attitude. He suggested that the idea of art for its own sake is, indeed, constructive to the extent that it liberates art from the old canon of having to "imitate" nature or "re-present" some fixed

moralizing message; but, he also pointed out that the idea is flawed if it suggests that there is no purpose or goal for art beyond its own immediate experience. The true aim of art, said Nietzsche, is the wider, enriched experience of more art, as well as life itself.<sup>46</sup>

The idea of art for art's sake has freed artistic creation and appreciation from the limits of the natural world. But, ironically, such a notion also has served to limit any purpose or goal for art beyond its own immediate having, thereby restricting the use of art for specific educational aims. In other words, because the aesthetic carries an intensely immediate and, thus, inherent value, the experience of art frequently is called "impractical." For example, a college textbook on music education (a field closely allied with developing the "aesthetic" in American schooling) describes an aesthetic experience as having

no practical or utilitarian purpose; instead, it is valued for the insight, satisfaction, and enjoyment that it provides. It is an end in itself, and not a means to something more desirable or important.<sup>47</sup>

Of course, it could be argued that the statement contains a contradiction, for something providing insight or enjoyment can be useful for health or even self cultivation. Indeed, to the ancient Greeks the idea of art for its own sake would have seemed absurd because, for them, the experience of art never was divorced from its social, and moral, function. Art was not conceived as an isolated end in itself, valuable only for its inherent beauty, because it also was aimed toward

some civic, religious, athletic, therapeutic, or educational end. This practical social function, combined with the inherent sensitivity to proportion, grace, and harmony, imbued Greek art with its enduring quality. Although art certainly is characterized by the immediate vitality of its perception and production, that is, its intrinsic worth, the point is that this does not deny art a pragmatic function as a means toward future aesthetic experience, not to mention future reflective or intellectual experience!

The complete meaning of art is discovered, then, when it also operates as a means toward both individual and social ends. The problem today, however, is that the holistic perspective of the ancient Greeks, which invested the aesthetic with both pragmatic and essential value, has been lost. Consequently, aesthetic production itself has been separated into the vocational "crafts" and the "fine" arts. The latter are justified by their inherent worth and "beauty" (art for art's sake), since they apparently lack any practical purpose. The practical crafts, on the other hand, are described as merely utilitarian, and their intrinsic ("aesthetic") value usually is underdeveloped and underappreciated. The resolution would be to reconstruct the attitude that views both types of aesthetic production as signifying works of art that, in varying proportion, integrate social purpose with inherent beauty or worth.



Underlying the dualistic perspective that sees art either as having practical consequences or else inherent beauty for its own sake is a logic that mechanically relates means to ends. Such a philosophy distorts the connection between methods and aims, conduct and meaning.<sup>48</sup> Even in the field of art education, the underlying dichotomy pits a "contextualist" approach, which develops the social context and consequences of art, against an "essentialist" focus on art's intrinsic value; hence, those who justify developing the "discipline-based" content of art education emphasize learning "art as art" rather than using art as "vehicles to some other non-art end."<sup>49</sup>

But does art in education either have to be used instrumentally for some "non-art" end or else learned intrinsically for its own sake? Perhaps the dualism is false: to appreciate the "essence" of art is to understand its social and psychological function, that is, its "context" of expression and communication. To define art or aesthetic activity merely "for its own sake" thus remains a problem because it implies that art lacks the potential of also being an intelligent method aimed at social and educational goals. Art is not impractical, nor does it have less use (making it "use-less") simply because it is appreciated highly for its intrinsic worth. Dewey alluded to this issue of aesthetic value as well as its problematic implications for schooling when he wrote,

The point at issue in a theory of educational value is then the unity or integrity of experience. . . . [Hence] we must not divide the studies of the curriculum into the appreciative, those concerned with intrinsic value, and the instrumental, concerned with those which are of value or ends beyond themselves.<sup>50</sup>

Dewey's warning seems to have gone unheeded, and the pedagogical danger of continuing to identify art as an "end in itself" is that it may, when incomplete, sink to an "aim-less" activity, without a coherent sense of direction or purpose. Such incoherent experiences usually make shallow educational resources; yet they sometimes are justified under the guise of an "aesthetic" education. One such program, for example, defined its goal to be "aesthetic awareness," the ability "to perceive artistic qualities keenly and respond to them deeply," and yet it stated that "any nonaesthetic outcomes of instruction that happen to occur, such as better reading and writing skills, are regarded as welcome bonuses rather than program goals."<sup>51</sup>

While programs like this intrinsically are valuable for developing aesthetic sensitivity, they explicitly ignore the practical value of using the arts as a means toward intellectual and even moral growth. Even worse, if reading and writing, not to mention mathematics and science, are viewed somehow as "nonaesthetic," then the rich artistic potential of these subjects is all but denied! Why not use poetry, drama, songs, and the like, to inculcate both aesthetic sensitivity and language skills? Why not use painting and architecture to develop both an appreciation for

art and as a means for the study of history or geography? To identify any activity--especially an educational activity--as "nonaesthetic" merely reinforces the cultural division that narrowly defines "art" only in terms of certain preestablished forms, and thus it effectively prohibits a widening of our educational vision.

Another significant problem with viewing the aesthetic only as an end in itself is that the moral meaning of art then becomes attached to the product, rather than also including the process, of aesthetic activity. In fact, past theories of art usually have associated art's moral significance with its function as a finished artifact, that is, by expressing some "moral" message or value. But this view is one sided if not static, for the work of art on its active creative side equally signifies an ethical value as a way of creating or, better, "re-creating" our self and our environment, as well as the meanings emerging from their interaction. Perhaps this is why so many creative artists seem to disdain the question that asks what their finished artwork "means," as if there was no meaning in the activity of creation itself!

When the value of art is conceived only in terms of artifacts, the individual's aesthetic process of creation, and interpretive recreation, often is devalued in favor of some preexisting moral idea found in the finished product. In terms of education, this position tends to erect official standards to which the products and interpretation of art

somehow must conform. Morality then becomes extrinsic, rather than intrinsic, to the artistic experience--and then can be used to propagandize, proselytize, or indoctrinate. Obviously, such a view of art in its relation to "morality" creates real problems for a democratic society that also values an informed and free thinking citizenry.<sup>52</sup> If the "moral of the story" or, for that matter, of music, dance, painting, and so on, is interpreted authoritatively as an unchanging message, then art becomes isolated from the present context in which its meaning is newly perceived and vitally recreated by each individual.<sup>53</sup>

One point here for education and society is that our personal "recreation" signifies a valuable activity of aesthetic production and appreciation and is not an idle amusement of little consequence. Forms of recreational leisure are potentially a moral means for transforming individual disposition and conduct in society. This has significant implications for the educational potential of those activities that we now tend to dismiss as mere personal or social recreation. Dewey made this exact point when he stated,

Education has no more serious responsibility than making adequate provision for enjoyment of recreative leisure; not only for the sake of immediate health, but still more if possible for the sake of its lasting effect upon habits of mind. Art is again the answer to this demand.<sup>54</sup>

However, if we fail to develop the relation between those habits of mind and their aesthetic recreations, then the

result can be a dualistic moral misconception that views schooling as the discipline of some purposeful "work," which is separate from the intrinsic recreation of "play." In this context, work (whether in school or on the job) easily becomes an anaesthetic drudgery devoid of imagination and emotion, while play (as art) represents some less valuable frill or pleasing diversion without any intellectual or practical purpose. The dualism carries a definite moral implication; hence, the American "work ethic" seems to contribute to the idea that schooling is a disciplining labor rather than an aesthetic recreational activity. Consequently, art has been undervalued morally as well as intellectually in the process of education.

Dewey long ago addressed the false dualism between "play and work" in the school curriculum, showing that they represent not opposites but part of a unified continuum.<sup>55</sup> Yet some modern educators (using the "split-brain" model, which will be discussed in the next chapter) preserve the dualism by opposing the (left-brain) "work" of science and logic to the (right-brain) "play" of art and creativity.<sup>56</sup> In order to reconstruct the full moral significance of the aesthetic, we need to cultivate the disposition in schooling and in daily life that discovers the aesthetic attitude within work as well as the moral and intellectual consequences within art and play.

The aim of this chapter has been to show that there are specific moral implications associated with art's educational value and purpose--or lack of it. The aesthetic usually is justified in schools (if at all) as an inherently worthwhile activity in itself; thus, art generally has not been developed as an educational method aimed at social, intellectual, and even moral ends beyond its own immediate worth. Aesthetic education then is interpreted as a sort of glorified fine arts appreciation. This attitude continues the social fragmentation that divorces the full meaning of the aesthetic from life itself. Translating the aesthetic narrowly into an educational straitjacket preserves the isolation of the aesthetic in culture.

For example, some supporters of aesthetic education maintain a rigid dualism that pits the "plight of the qualitative," which is the aesthetic, against the rational or intellectual, so that "neither necessarily depends on the other for its presence"; poetry, as qualitative experience, then is said to have no "practical value" in schooling.<sup>57</sup> We are left with a purely mechanical model of mind that assumes an epistemological division between the aesthetic and the intellect, as well as a social separation of instrumentally useful values from those that are inherently qualitative. The perspective epitomizes the narrow view that prevents the use of aesthetic materials and experience as a pragmatic means

toward intellectual development. Dewey once criticized this nonutilitarian attitude toward poetry in schooling by saying,

An education which does not succeed in making poetry a resource in the business of life as well as in its leisure, has something the matter with it--or else the poetry is artificial poetry.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, from an integrative Deweyan perspective (which will be developed in a later chapter), the perceptual world of quality and the conceptual world of reason each acquires its meaning because of the existence of the other. Sense qualities feed thought, while reflective thinking functions to evaluate and complete aesthetic experience. This also signifies that inherent and instrumental value complement one another socially: work is more valuable to the degree that it is immediately appreciated, and art becomes complete (and valuable) when its vital energy is put to some use. However, before presenting this Deweyan perspective, we must examine perhaps the most fundamental problem in aesthetic inquiry, which is the root of many conceptual and moral difficulties, the problem of dualism.

#### Notes:

1. The other traditional philosophic categories are metaphysics, epistemology, and logic. See J. Donald Butler, Four Philosophies and their Practice in Education and Religion (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957) pp. 48-54.
2. H.I. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity, trans. by G. Lamb (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1956; orig. pub. 1948), pp. 43-45. "Kalos" signified physical beauty and "agathos" denoted good conduct.

3. See, for example, William F. Buckley, "Don't Put Too Much Faith in the Art Critics," Florida Times Union, 23 September 1989, 24A and "Court Ruling Sanctions Abuse of Obscenity Law," Florida Times Union, 16 October 1990, 5A; Jonathan Yardley, "Real Issue is Government's Involvement in Arts," Florida Times Union, 19 September 1990, 9A; Judy Keen, "Obscenity on Trial Today--Cincinnati Gallery Defends Artistic Freedom," USA Today, 24 September 1990, 1A; and J. Tomas Lopez, "Mapplethorpe's Revival of the Avant-Garde," Organica, vol. 19, no. 33 (Autumn 1990), 5, 27.
4. See Holly Stacy, "Possible Link Between Music and Delinquency Found," Gainesville Sun, 10 April 1989, 1B.
5. Richard Corliss, "X Rated," Time, 7 May 1990, 92-100. The cover story of this issue was devoted to the controversy over art censorship. (Incidentally, the lead singer of "2 Live Crew" was acquitted on obscenity charges recently, while, in a separate trial, a merchant selling the group's album was found guilty!)
6. See "Ministers Argue about Religion's Place in Public Education," The Florida Times-Union Religion Magazine, 19 November 1988, 11.
7. Plato, The Republic (Books III and X), trans. by D. Lee New York: Penguin Books, 1955), pp. 140-160, 421-439.
8. See John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934), p. 119: "It cannot be asserted too strongly that what is not immediate is not aesthetic."
9. Wellington Madenfort, "The Aesthetic as Immediately Sensuous: An Historical Perspective," Studies in Art Education, vol 16, no. 1 (1974-75), 5-17.
10. See John Dewey, Reconstruction in Philosophy (New York: Holt, 1920), pp. 1-28.
11. Aristotle, Metaphysics (Book I), in Greek Philosophy: Thales to Aristotle, 2d ed., ed. by R. Allen (New York: Free Press, 1985), p. 309.
12. Aristotle also had distinguished the higher "intellectual virtue" of philosophic wisdom (sophia) from the more "practical virtue" of making (poesis) and doing (praxis). See Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics, rev. ed., trans. by D. Ross (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 137-158.



13. See John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916), pp. 250-261, for the significance of "labor and leisure" in American education.
14. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity, pp. 217-226.
15. Dewey, Democracy and Education, pp. 257, 260.
16. Ibid., p. 260.
17. Practical aesthetic activities, such as cooking, sewing, and weaving, have been associated traditionally with women's work and thus perhaps depreciated in a culture that for much of its history excluded women from professional training. Even the fine arts first were taught to women more as a physical decoration than an intellectual training. In the colonial South, aristocratic women were educated only in "embellishments such as music, dancing, and French," while the northern female seminaries of the nineteenth century similarly aimed "to provide a veneer of artificial graces and a superficial knowledge of drawing, painting, and music." See Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Co., 1978; orig. pub. 1935), pp. 170, 175.
18. See Thomas Hanna, Bodies in Revolt (New York: Dell Publishing, 1970).
19. Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy (1872), trans. by W. Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967).
20. Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), pp. 132-137, discusses the meaning of "eros" in Greek education as the natural balancing of passion and intellect, sexuality and spirituality, and he notes that modern education has lost that sense of wholeness.
21. Plato, The Republic (Book IV), pp. 196-224.
22. Robert Ulich, History of Educational Thought, rev. ed. (New York: American Book Company, 1968), pp. 72-88. The early Church fathers undoubtedly were influenced by Plato's philosophy; but incorporating Greek education into Christian faith created a problem. Tatian and Tertullian condemned the pagan music and gymnastics of the Greeks as unfit for a Christian education. Saint Augustine, however, first tried to combine the two traditions, but later he retracted that position.

23. Descartes' "scientific" explanation of this body/mind split cemented the dualism in modern thought. See Rene Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy (1641), trans. by L. Lafleur (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1951).
24. In the analogy of the Divided Line, Plato actually demarcated four distinct levels: the visible realm consists of the "illusions" of art as well as the appearances of nature, while the invisible realm is divided into mathematical reasoning and pure intelligence. Thus, there is a ladder leading from art to nature to mathematics to pure thought. See Plato, The Republic (Book VI), pp. 309-312.
25. In the Phaedo, Plato said that the sensations and desires of the body can mislead the soul's search for wisdom, and the famous allegory of the Cave, in the Republic, metaphorically expressed the same idea. However, in the Symposium and elsewhere, Plato implied that art and nature "imitate" (mimesis) and, thus, can direct the soul toward the invisible realm of pure forms. See Great Dialogues of Plato, trans. by W.H.D. Rouse (New York: The New American Library, 1956).
26. Medieval artists, unlike those of the Renaissance, were anonymous craftsmen. Yet despite the moral depreciation of the aesthetic, art became the most pervasive form for communicating Christian faith through reliquaries, sculpture, liturgical music, paintings, tapestries, and manuscript illuminations. The medieval cathedrals, especially, functioned to educate the public who "read" the religious narratives in the sculpture, mosaics, stained glass windows, and so forth. See H.W. Janson, History of Art, 2d ed. (New York: Harry Abrams, 1977).
27. See Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity, p. 95: "Physical culture became less and less important. . . . [and] intellectual culture . . . [on] its artistic and musical side finally yielded precedence to literature . . . . education became more and more dependent on books, and in consequence took a more scholastic turn."
28. Plato, The Republic (Book X), pp. 436-439. By aiming to transform the image and content of art, Plato was one of the first "iconoclasts" (literally, a breaker of icons).
29. Herbert Read, Education Through Art (London: Faber and Faber, 1958), p. 61, states that aesthetic education was "clearly demonstrated by Plato twenty-four centuries ago and made the basis of his ideal educational system."

30. See David Swanger, "Shadow and Light: Read, Dewey, Plato, and Aesthetic Education," Journal of Education, vol. 164, no. 3 (Summer 1982), 256-269. Swanger also cites Plato as the originator of aesthetic education; yet he accuses Read (along with Dewey) of promoting an unacceptable "democratization of the aesthetic."
31. Wellington Madenfort, A Phenomenology of the Esthetic and Art Education (Ed.D. dissertation: Pennsylvania State University, 1965).
32. William Barrett, Irrational Man (New York: Doubleday, 1958).
33. In the Euthyphro and Meno, Plato analyzed the meaning of "holiness" and "virtue" respectively, and he questioned whether they could be taught. See Greek Philosophy: Thales to Aristotle, pp. 57-73, 110-141. For the limitations of modern analytic philosophy, in contrast, see Kenneth Seeskin, "Never Speculate, Never Explain--The State of Contemporary Philosophy," The American Scholar, vol. 49 (Winter 1979-1980), 19-33.
34. See John Hermann Randall, How Philosophy Uses its Past (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963). Kant had recognized the dichotomy, and he aimed philosophy toward an integration of rational and empirical method. See also Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 131, where Dewey traced this historical dualism in philosophy between idealism and empiricism back to the epistemological separation of sense from thought.
35. Thomas Munro, "The Role of Aesthetic Education in Cultural Evolution," Journal of Aesthetic Education, vol. 2, no. 4 (Oct. 1968), 87-99. Cf. also Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 282: "The classic and the romantic . . . represent tendencies that mark every authentic work of art. What is called classic stands for objective order and relations embodied in a work; what is called romantic stands for the freshness and spontaneity that comes from individuality. At different periods and by different artists, one or the other tendency is carried to an extreme."
36. See Margaret Moorman, "The Great Art Education Debate," Art News (Summer 1989), 124-131.
37. See A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1983), where the arts are mentioned only superficially and are not included in its "back to basics" recommendation.

38. John Dewey, How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1933), p. 51.
39. Harold Taylor, Art and the Intellect (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1960), p. 14, writes that "those who believe that the creative arts are central to education, and that the arts contain within themselves an intellectual discipline no less demanding than the sciences, must be very clear about what they mean and how they propose to apply what they mean."
40. See, for example, George Leonard, "The Great School Reform Hoax: What's Really Needed to Improve Public Education," Esquire, April 1984, 47-56.
41. Dewey, How We Think, pp. 51-52. It is quite interesting that, in light of the contemporary "split-brain" theory, Dewey concluded by stating, "or a mythological brain physiology is appealed to as proof that any exercise of the muscles trains power of thought."
42. See, for example, Louis Arnaud Reid, "Knowledge, Morals, and Aesthetic Education," Journal of Aesthetic Education, vol. 2, no. 3 (July 1968), 41-54; Edmund Feldman, "Ethics and Aesthetics," chap. in Becoming Human Through Art: Aesthetic Experience in the School (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 100-139; and Herbert Read, "The Aesthetic Basis of Discipline and Morality," chap. in Education Through Art, pp. 265-284.
43. See Albert Tsugawa, "The Nature of the Aesthetic and Human Values," Art Education, vol. 21 (Nov. 1968), 11-20, for an excellent discussion of this theme.
44. See Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 40. Aristotle had discussed moral and aesthetic virtue as depending on the mean, which is neither more nor less than is needed. See Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics (Book II), pp. 38-39.
45. See John Canaday, Mainstreams of Modern Art, 2d ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981). Modern art culminated the naturalistic tradition that began in the Renaissance. Medieval painting was, in a sense, also "abstract," for it was less concerned with representing the natural world; but it served a religious function and was not viewed as an end in itself.
46. Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols (1889), trans. by R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 81: "The struggle against purpose in art is always a struggle against the subordination of art to morality. . . . [but]

when one has excluded from art the purpose of moral preaching . . . it by no means follows that art is completely purposeless, goalless, meaningless . . . is [the artist's] basic instinct directed towards art, or is it not rather directed toward the meaning of art, which is life? Art is the great stimulus to life: how could it be thought purposeless, aimless, l'art pour l'art?"

47. Harold Abeles, Charles Hoffer, and Robert Klotman, Foundations of Music Education (New York: Schirmer Books, 1984), p. 62.
48. See John Dewey, "The Nature of Aims" (1922), in John Dewey on Education, ed. by R.D. Archambault (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 70-80.
49. See Evan Kern, "Antecedents of DBAE: State Departments of Education Curriculum Documents," and Arthur Efland, "Curriculum Antecedents of DBAE," in Discipline-Based Art Education: Origins, Meaning, and Development, ed. by R.A. Smith (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), pp. 36, 88.
50. Dewey, Democracy and Education, pp. 248-249.
51. Bennett Reimer, "Education for Aesthetic Awareness: The Cleveland Area Project," Music Educators Journal, vol. 64 (1978), p. 69 (emphasis mine).
52. See Art in a Democracy, ed. by Doug Blandy and Kristin Congdon (New York: Columbia University Teachers College Press, 1987).
53. Cf. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 346: "The theories that attribute direct moral effect and intent to art fail because they do not take account of the . . . context in which works of art are produced and enjoyed."
54. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 205.
55. Ibid., pp. 194-206.
56. Bob Samples, The Metaphoric Mind (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1976), pp. 18-19.
57. Joe Green and Fredrick Silverman, "Aesthetic Education and the Plight of the Qualitative," Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science, vol. 5 (1980), p. 100.
58. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 241.

CHAPTER 4  
SCHOOLING THE "SPLIT-BRAIN":  
THE PROBLEM OF DUALISM

The visible and the invisible give birth to each other; work and play complement each other; long and short define each other; high and low incline towards each other; voice and sound harmonize each other; front and back follow each other.

Lao Tze

When the aesthetic, defined as immediate sense experience, is contrasted with the role of intelligence to mediate that experience, there is a common tendency to separate and oppose the two. Similar philosophic divisions between body and mind, subject and object, individual and social, art and science, and so on, continue to influence both our theories of art and education. One purpose of this chapter is to examine the traditional dualism between the aesthetic and the intellect--between sensing and thinking--that historically has pervaded philosophy as well as psychology, thereby affecting the practice of schooling.

The logical problem of dualism represents one of the major difficulties in developing a coherent and consistent conception of the aesthetic and, hence, an understanding of aesthetic education. When binary conceptual distinctions are made about the elements of consciousness, there is a logical tendency to (mis)interpret them as a duality of opposites

rather than as an organic unity. If thinking and feeling, for example, are viewed as separate entities, rather than as interdependent functions, then we develop a mechanical and static model of mind upon which our education is based. The problem with this bifurcated vision is that it blinds us to the dynamic integrative context within which life and learning could be cultivated.

In our own time, one of the most conspicuous examples of the problematic persistence of dualistic thinking and its adverse consequences for education is the concept of the so called "split-brain." Appealing to professionals and public alike, this popular notion assumes that consciousness and, thus, experience is fragmented and dualistic. The paradigm generally implies that reason, logic, and "scientific" thinking reside in the left hemisphere of the brain, separate from emotion, while intuition and "artistic" imagination supposedly are the function of the brain's right hemisphere.<sup>1</sup> Such a dichotomy acts to divorce the aesthetic from the intellect logically, psychologically, and epistemologically. The dualism also preserves a static social separation of art from science. Ironically, Dewey seems to have anticipated the present problem of the split-brain paradigm--as well as its crucial connection to education--when he observed, in How We Think, that

Human beings are not normally divided into two parts, the one emotional, the other coldly intellectual--the one matter of fact, the other imaginative. The split does, indeed, often get established, but that is always because of false methods of education. Natively and normally the personality works as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

The contemporary concept of the split-brain presents a concrete opportunity to review what commonly is meant by the aesthetic in relation to the intellect and to examine how education both affects and is affected by that relation. Thus, the paradigm is important because from a philosophical (as well as physiological) perspective the idea has enormous social and psychological implications for the theory and practice of education. Indeed, the notion that "left-brain" methods of teaching and learning can be separated and even opposed to those that are "right-brain" tends to reduce schooling to the type of either/or dualism that Dewey also warned about in Experience and Education.<sup>3</sup> Another aim of this chapter, then, is to demonstrate the conceptual and pedagogical problems inherent in the split-brain theory in order (in the next chapter) to help reconstruct the meaning and practice of the aesthetic as the integrative quality of intelligence itself.

#### History of the Split-Brain Theory

An understanding of how the human brain functions undoubtedly has the potential to enhance teaching and learning.<sup>4</sup> Of course, the brain normally functions as a complete and healthy organ; hence, it is important to note



that the split-brain theory originally was derived from the abnormal circumstance of surgically severed or damaged brains.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the brain can be viewed from a trinary (rather than binary) perspective, which also would have different implications for schooling and society.<sup>6</sup> The fact that the social, psychological, and educational use of the split-brain idea has been derived from experimental research in neurology and medicine suggests a philosophic problem of interpretation. Thus, it might be useful to review briefly the history of that research in order to interpret the findings accurately.

By the beginning of the 1900s medical knowledge of stroke and other brain damaged patients revealed that, for most people, language and speech are controlled primarily by the brain's left cerebral hemisphere.<sup>7</sup> Because of the importance of language to human reason and intelligence, it is not surprising that the left side of the brain was labelled the "dominant" hemisphere, while the right cerebral lobe, lacking any obvious function, was deemed the "minor" hemisphere.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, long before the actual split-brain research was begun, medical science viewed the twin hemispheres of the human brain as separate and unequal, an asymmetrical paradigm that would be carried over into the new discoveries about brain functioning.<sup>9</sup>

During the 1950s Roger Sperry performed the first split-brain experiments on animals by severing the corpus

collosum, the large nerve that connects--and integrates--the two cerebral hemispheres in all mammals.<sup>10</sup> (Sperry later won a Nobel Prize for this work.) After conducting elaborately designed experiments, Sperry found that the animals "could learn diametrically opposed solutions to the same experimental problem . . . as though each hemisphere were a separate mental domain."<sup>11</sup> The seeds of dichotomy are clearly present in this finding, and they bore fruit in the early 1960s when the first human split-brain operations were performed, severing the corpus collosum in order to help cure severe epileptic seizures.

Sperry then conducted experiments with these literal "split-brain" patients whose epileptic seizures had been cured by the operation. He found that they verbally could name an object held in their right hand, which is connected primarily to the left hemisphere, but that they could not name the same object when held in their left hand, which is connected to the opposite hemisphere. However, using the right hemisphere (the left hand), the patients could identify the same objects nonverbally through visual or tactile means.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Joseph Bogen, one of the neurosurgeons who performed the original operation, conducted his own observations. Bogen found that his patients could copy words with their right hand (left hemisphere) but not with their left hand; yet the same patients could copy geometric shapes with their left hand (right hemisphere) but, again, not with their opposite hand.<sup>13</sup>

The seminal split-brain research thus confirmed that language ability appeared to be the function of the brain's left hemisphere, while also revealing that visual, tactile, spatial, and even kinesthetic perception seemed to be specialized in the right cerebral hemisphere.<sup>14</sup> Researchers soon verified these findings through elaborate artificial split-brain techniques that isolated visual or auditory stimuli to one or the other side of the brain.<sup>15</sup> Of course, even these experiments on "normal" subjects still create an "abnormal" situation because we do not usually see or hear with only one side of the brain.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the overwhelming implication was that the aesthetic immediacy of sense perception is divorced from language and thought. One researcher even justified the dualism by stating that

The right brain reacts to sensory information in a more primitive and direct way, so the feelings retain their immediateness and power. In the left brain the sensory inputs tend to be interpreted in words and thus lose much of their emotional value. The dichotomy is thus between a cold intellectual approach and a gut level approach.<sup>17</sup>

Consequently, the left-brain became associated with the symbolic conceptions of logic and reason, while the right-brain was identified with direct aesthetic perception, especially the immediate sense of emotion.<sup>18</sup> The ancient, traditional philosophic distinction between aisthesis and logos had become hardened through scientific experimentation into a rigid and reified dichotomy. Moreover, the idea that the right hemisphere is the "emotional" side of the brain also had emerged from the medical study of brain damaged patients,

some of whom could not speak properly, yet their expression of song, intonation, and even curse words remained unimpaired!<sup>19</sup> And earlier research suggesting that music is processed in the right cerebral hemisphere lent yet more evidence for labelling it the emotional, expressive and "aesthetic" side of the brain.<sup>20</sup> It is worth noting again that all of the findings from these abnormal circumstances, that is, patients suffering from stroke and brain damage, simply were applied to normal brain functioning, as if these situations did not involve physiological as well as psychological differences from the norm. Nonetheless, the dichotomy became cemented as further experimental research, using an artificially induced split-brain device, linked the processing of nonverbal ("emotional") sounds such as laughing, crying, and musical melodies with the right hemisphere of the brain.<sup>21</sup>

This discussion is not intended to deny that the split-brain research has increased our understanding of biology and human behavior. The fact of a neurological basis for cerebral specialization is not in dispute here. However, the fact of cerebral specialization does not logically imply an isolation and separation of brain functioning, let alone a one sided pedagogical program. Indeed, it could be argued that the evolution of specialization in the human brain aims toward a greater integration of intelligence, just as the organism of society evolves to the degree that its specialized functions work together rather than split apart. Furthermore,

a final question needs to be asked: does the split-brain condition reveal or, rather, cause the underlying physiology? In other words, is it possible to take the abnormal split-brain condition (whether experimentally or pathologically induced) and use it as a paradigm for the normal organic functioning of the human psyche?

Despite these questions and problems, the theory in general has given attention to the fact of two unique and distinct modes of human cognition, namely the aesthetic immediacy of qualitative perception and the rational mediation of conceptual analysis. As such, these two ways of knowing are represented--at least metaphorically--by the right and left hemispheres of the brain. Thus, the split-brain research has provided an empirical, scientific foundation for defining perception and conception as distinct forms of consciousness. The idea itself, though, is not new. William James once described the same distinction when he stated that "there are two ways of knowing things, knowing them immediately or intuitively, and knowing them conceptually or representively."<sup>22</sup>

Dewey (who was greatly influenced by James) emphasized the organic unity of these two distinct methods of intelligence when he wrote that "our intellectual progress consists in a rhythm of direct understanding, technically called apprehension, with indirect, mediated understanding, technically called comprehension."<sup>23</sup> The consequence of the

split-brain theory, however, has been to legitimize two competing views of knowledge according to the specialized functions of the two sides of the brain. The relation of the two cognitive processes, as well as the two brain hemispheres, has been interpreted not as an organic whole but as a static and even forced separation--indicated by the very term "split-brain."

### Problems for Education

By now, the enormous educational consequences of the split-brain theory should be clear.<sup>24</sup> In fact, an undeniable influence is revealed when educators talk about "teaching for the two-sided mind" or "thinking with the whole brain."<sup>25</sup> But if cognitive processes are mechanically set off from each other and identified with either the left or the right side of the brain, then teaching and learning also will be viewed as affecting primarily one or the other hemisphere.<sup>26</sup> Hence, the split-brain model continues the problematic paradigm of dichotomy in present culture. Some people today even argue that American society discriminates against the aesthetic, intuitive right hemisphere, and that our schooling thus educates only the left side of the brain! At the very dawn of the split-brain research, Sperry had foreshadowed its vast social and educational implications by concluding,

There appear to be two modes of thinking, verbal and nonverbal, represented rather separately in left and right hemispheres, respectively, and our educational system, as well as science in general, tends to neglect the nonverbal form of intellect. What it comes down to is that modern society discriminates against the right hemisphere.<sup>27</sup>

Significantly, the split-brain theory is an advance over the earlier brain paradigm of cerebral dominance and asymmetry that totally segregated the right hemisphere, viewing it as mute and lacking any distinct functional value. The split-brain research has demonstrated that the right cerebral hemisphere makes its own unique contribution to the process of cognition. Clearly, then, the idea has helped to effect a positive social reevaluation of the role of art and the aesthetic (the so called "right-brain") in psychology and schooling. Education now has a scientific basis for developing its creative and qualitative context, as well as its quantitative intellectual consequences, in an organic holistic fashion. But the danger is the recurring tendency to view the two processes of knowing--which become two methods for teaching and learning--as separate rather than complementary.<sup>28</sup> The problem remains: the split-brain theory fails as a catalyst of social and educational reform if it continues to perpetuate mechanical divisions and traditional dualisms.

Indeed, such traditional dualisms have been reinforced and reapplied based on the assumed opposition of the two brain hemispheres.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, science and reason are reified into the left hemisphere of the brain and set off from the

right hemisphere, which then is seen as the seat of art and human "creativity."<sup>30</sup> The dualism naturally is carried into education whenever an aesthetic "right-brain" schooling for art and creativity is isolated from (or even simply added to) a "left-brain" curriculum of science, language, and mathematics. Some works and workshops further promote an anatagonism between creativity and reason by suggesting that "right-brain" drawing and art is achieved best through the conscious suppression of "left-brain" logical analysis.<sup>31</sup> One grave problem for schooling, then, is the way in which a remedial "right-brained approach to learning" is called upon in order to supplant the apparent overemphasis on the "left-brain."<sup>32</sup> Ironically, such one sided programs almost always are linked to the concept of aesthetic and even "holistic" education.<sup>33</sup>

These educational interpretations are based, of course, on the experimental findings where the left side of the brain similarly was deemed to be "logical" and "analytic," while the right half was labelled the "holistic" or "gestalt" mode.<sup>34</sup> In social terms this easily came to be identified as the method of science compared to that of art. Consequently, common aesthetic concepts like "intuition" and "imagination" became characterized as holistic (right-brain) functions separate from the logical work of science. The dualism has been promoted (even somewhat proselytized) by psychologists who argue that there is an inbuilt antagonism between the



linearity of logic and the simultaneity of intuition, between the analytic process of reason and the synthetic process of imagination.<sup>35</sup> Another researcher justified the dichotomy by arguing that the two cognitive functions, housed separately in the two brain hemispheres, are "mutually inhibitory" and thus incompatible!<sup>36</sup> It is little wonder, then, that some educators aim to develop the artistic, "metaphoric mind" in contrast to the rational and scientific brain.<sup>37</sup> All of this again preserves the larger separation of art from science in the school curriculum.

As Dewey pointed out, theoretical dualisms of any form impede the integrative practice of education. The split-brain dichotomy will continue to fragment education until we recognize that a "holistic" and "aesthetic" (right-brain) schooling--while certainly developing physical, emotional, and artistic faculties--also can incorporate, rather than shun, the intellectual skills and critical thinking that often is associated with traditional (or left-brain) schooling. Like the brain itself, pedagogy remains split unless critical and creative methods are integrated organically rather than opposed mechanically. For example, the primary distinction that emerged from the split-brain research set language, as the vehicle of conceptual mediation, over against the aesthetic immediacy of sense perception and emotion. When misapplied to schooling, the distinction can reinforce those programs of "aesthetic" education that actually divorce

sensory awareness and art appreciation from the basic duty of schooling to develop the conceptual language skills of reading and writing.<sup>38</sup>

Yet language itself is inherently aesthetic. As every poet, songwriter, and orator knows, words can function as a vehicle to convey feeling as well as ideas. Certainly words and other symbols do carry intellectual meaning by abstractly standing for something beyond themselves. All symbolic systems function to "in-form," that is, put into form, conceptual thinking. Whether verbal, musical, mathematical, or pictorial, symbols constitute the medium of every language, and, thus, they are carried in some form or matter that is perceived through sense. In fact, the symbolic meaning of words can be derived only from their concrete embodiment in aural or visual (or, for the blind, tactile) form. Hence, the aesthetic always functions as the context for thought. Moreover, as Dewey put it, because

the senses are the organs through which the live creature participates directly in the ongoings of the world about him . . . . this material . . . cannot be opposed to intellect, for mind is the means by which participation is rendered fruitful through sense.<sup>39</sup>

The point is that since sense and symbol form an organic relation in the psyche, they cannot be segregated in the social process of schooling. The right hemisphere of the brain does not simply turn off just because one is engaged in the abstract "intellectual" process of reading or writing. Rather, language is expressed by and through sense material,

including the material of imagination and emotion. Moreover, the study of language--like that of every work of art--constitutes an intimate interaction between the ideas that the words symbolize, that is, its content, and the immediate manner in which it is spoken or written, its form.<sup>40</sup> In reading and writing as well as speaking there is always an aesthetic embodiment through which concepts are clothed and communicated.

Poetry carries rich intellectual and artistic value precisely because the abstract meanings of words are affected enormously by the way in which they are concretely sounded or shaped. It is also a fact that the logical structure of language, its grammar and syntax, is expressed universally through such aesthetic forms as poetry, drama, and song. But, if we define--and, hence, teach--language only as a prosaic ("left-brain") logic that is separate from a creative ("right-brain") aesthetic, then we belie the meaning and very title of "Language Arts" in the school curriculum. On the other hand, if we assume that aesthetic education somehow excludes the abstract conceptual tools of language and thought, then schooling also will remain incomplete. As Dewey seems to have predicted long ago, if the split-brain dualism is translated to education, then

The evil that especially concerns us in this connection is failure to see that vital appreciations--that is, ideas involving emotional response and imaginative projection--are ultimately as necessary in history, mathematics, scientific fields, in all so-called informational and intellectual subjects, as they are in literature and the fine arts.<sup>41</sup>

### Integrating the Aesthetic into Schooling

The real problem for education concerns not so much the split-brain theory itself as the manner in which it is used. The main question for schooling, then, is the way in which the experimental discoveries in brain research are applied to the classroom. Specifically, how can the renewed idea of a creative ("right-brain") aesthetic be incorporated into the present practice of education? One way to theoretically "integrate" the split-brain is to collapse its uniquely specialized functions into a conceptual identity.<sup>42</sup> But this approach seems to just muddle the issue. A genuine integration, in contrast, resembles a biological symbiosis: it functions as an organic whole only when the unique role and interdependence of each part is acknowledged. The same applies for the way in which the aesthetic and the intellect are to be integrated in the process of education. In other words, to balance organically does not mean simply to collapse together or even to add together in a mechanical way.

Consequently, the best test of a genuine aesthetic education may be the way in which it integrates its parts into a qualitative whole. The split-brain idea seems to imply a static "integration" of thinking and feeling where reason

coldly stands back and examines the qualities of emotion or sense. In fact, this is akin to the rather narrow description of "aesthetic education" as consisting of "cognition about the feelings."<sup>43</sup> Yet, on the contrary, the distinguishing mark of a dynamic aesthetic education is that it discovers and employs cognition through the feelings. The change of preposition makes all the difference: it indicates whether the contents of consciousness are viewed as mechanically divided or organically related, and that, in turn, will determine the method of an aesthetic education. Thus, integrating the aesthetic into education means more than simply teaching about art or beauty or even sensory awareness; it also means recovering the vital aesthetic quality within the formation of intelligence.

As parents, teachers, and politicians increasingly discuss the fragmented state of American education (mirrored perhaps by the the split-brain itself), the urgent practical problem concerns what corrective action to take in order to resolve the present difficulties. Education can develop the whole person in an integrative fashion; yet an integration is not simply an addition. If human cognition is identified as either "left-brain" or "right-brain," then the danger is that the method and subject matter of education also will be similarly divided. Consequently, many proposals to reform schooling suggest simply appending creatively aesthetic forms of teaching and learning to the more traditional subjects and

methods. Despite the positive points of such reforms, the underlying assumption works against a genuine integration because it warrants an artificial split in social policy as well as human psychology. For example, one psychologist suggested the need for reform by stating,

The realization that schools spend most of their time training students in what seem to be left-hemisphere skills, and that most educators and taxpayers regard what seem to be right-hemisphere skills as frills, has caused many people to wonder whether our educational system is unbalanced. . . . Our schools offer an education for half our minds, and it is time to reinstate a balance."<sup>44</sup>

The problem, of course, is that the educational "balance" called for implies simply adding one half of the formula to the other. The idea of schooling the other "half" of the brain (or mind) maintains a dualism under the guise of an integration! To cite another example, a prominent "holistic" educator has criticized the conservative back to basics reform by suggesting that an "education of the purely rational faculties is only half an education," and that the "nonrational" faculties exercised by an arts education program could supply the other half; thus, the author concluded that "the neglect of integrative, nonacademic education by those who would reform the schools is nothing less than scandalous."<sup>45</sup>

Admittedly, the criticism of any educational reform that ignores art as well as the "integrative" function of aesthetic experience is valid and important. Yet the above critique remains limited, for it is not used to transform

traditional academic schooling. Rather, in the interest of holistic education, a dualism paradoxically is preserved as the mind is divided into rational and nonrational faculties, which also results in segregating the school curriculum into "academic" and "nonacademic" subjects. Merely adding one half to the other, as the author seems to propose, equals more--but not necessarily better--education. As a final irony, the idea of the aesthetic in education is defined here not as the organic integration of mind and subject matter, but instead it is isolated and associated primarily with "nonrational" processes and "nonacademic" subjects.

The question, then, is whether the new perspective supplied by the split-brain model serves to reconstruct and unify the existing school system or, rather, suggests a quantitative (and expensive) addition of new courses embodying the new found values. It appears that the creative, aesthetic side of the split-brain model has not been used to enliven the method and goal of all instruction. Even a so called "whole brain" approach often assumes an underlying split that merely adds new subjects to the curriculum without influencing the current ones. Moreover, sometimes there is an overreaction to the extreme, in which ("right-brain") programs of "alternative" education are called upon in order to replace the method and content of conventional schooling. Such a pendulum-like reaction limits the full potential of education. Long before the development of the split-brain idea, Dewey had

foreseen that the real issue is the way in which such newly discovered educational values can be misused. Thus, many of today's proposed reforms are problematic because

the [current educational] deficiency is not laid to the isolation and narrowness of the teaching of the existing subjects, and this recognition made the basis of reorganization of the system. No, the lack is something to be made up for by the introduction of still another study, or, if necessary, another kind of school. . . . The new studies, representing the new interests, have not been used to transform the method and aim of all instruction; they have been injected and added on.<sup>46</sup>

To sum up, the unfortunate consequence of the split-brain theory has been to perpetuate the division between the aesthetic and the intellect in education. Even though the paradigm has led to a social and psychological reevaluation of aesthetic activities, the dichotomy is maintained and tends to deny the contribution that the arts can make to intellectual life. The aesthetic still is opposed to basic academic schooling, obscuring the rational consequences of art as experience as well as the inherent aesthetic quality of reflective thinking. Moreover, the antagonistic idea that a ("right-brain") schooling for art and creativity can be achieved through the suppression of ("left-brain") logic and analysis only fractures education further. Finally, even the idea of educating the "whole brain" usually is based on an erroneous assumption that views an integrated synthesis as a mere mechanical and quantitative addition of the two apparent extremes--thereby preserving the dialectic that continues to



divide logic from imagination, reason from emotion, and science from art.

In contrast to the split-brain logic, a more organic Deweyan perspective, which will be used as a corrective in the next chapter, discovers that each half of the formula actually carries the seed of its apparent opposite. Hence, the test of a genuine integration of schooling--an aesthetic education--is to recognize how the so called "nonacademic" methods of art and aesthetic experience can be applied to enliven the basic academic curriculum. In a reciprocal manner, academic inquiry and critical thinking can be evoked through the immediate aesthetic experience of art. The two distinct types of cognitive activities that the split-brain represents are not segregated but interdependent. They participate as an ensemble in every vital educational experience, whether that experience focuses on the qualitative, as does art and the aesthetic, or emphasizes reflective thought, as does science and inquiry. However, if educators do not apply the natural interaction of both sides of the brain to every aspect of teaching and learning, then schooling risks a mechanical split and a numbing anaesthetization.

#### Notes:

1. See Robert Ornstein, "Right and Left Thinking," Psychology Today, vol. 6, no. 12 (May 1973), 86-92, and The Nature of Human Consciousness (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman & Co., 1973). Ornstein first popularized the idea that the split-brain reflected a cultural as well as a psychological split between the "scientific" West and the "holistic" East.

2. John Dewey, How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1933), p. 278 (emphasis mine).
3. John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: Collier Books, 1938), p. 17.
4. See Education and the Brain: The Seventy-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, ed. by J. Chall and A. Mirsky (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).
5. See Thomas Blakeslee, The Right Brain (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press, 1980), for the biological background of the split-brain theory.
6. Paul Maclean, "A Mind of Three Minds: Educating the Triune Brain," in Education and the Brain, pp. 308-342. From this perspective, the brain is viewed according to three stages of evolution, with three correspondingly distinct parts, and thus encompasses more than just the two hemispheres of the mammalian cerebral cortex (upon which the split-brain theory is based).
7. Richard Restak, The Brain: The Last Frontier (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), pp. 165, 180-183. During the late nineteenth century, a French surgeon, Paul Broca, and a German neurologist, Carl Wernicke, each discovered a localization of language ability in the left hemisphere of the brain. (About 2% of right-handed people and 40% of left-handed people have a right hemisphere specialization for linguistic functioning.) Also, if there is brain damage to one hemisphere before the age of five, cerebral specialization of language will develop in the opposite hemisphere. See Blakeslee, The Right Brain, p. 149.
8. Restak, The Brain: The Last Frontier, p. 169. The paradigm of cerebral dominance became the norm; one neurology text even stated that "in man the higher cortical functions are vested principally in the left hemisphere." See O. Strong and A. Elwyn, Human Neuroanatomy (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1943), p. 374.
9. See Restak, The Brain: The Last Frontier, p. 165. In 1844, after performing an autopsy on a patient who had only one cerebral hemisphere, an English physician hypothesized that the fact of two cerebral hemispheres suggested the possession of two distinct "minds." See A.L. Wigan, The Duality of Mind (London: Longham Press, 1844).

10. Roger Sperry, "The Great Cerebral Commissure," Scientific American, vol. 210 (1964), 42-52. The integrative role of the corpus collosum is significant: it is "the largest mass of connecting fibres in the nervous system. . . . [and its] degree of development is proportional to the development of the neocortex itself." See Kevin Walsh, Neuropsychology (New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1978), p. 53.
11. Sperry, "The Great Cerebral Commissure," p. 43.
12. Michael Gazzaniga, "The Split Brain in Man," Scientific American, vol. 217 (1967), 24-29. Sperry wrote that "instead of the normally unified single stream of consciousness, these [split-brain] patients behaved in many ways as if they have two independent streams of conscious awareness, one in each hemisphere, each of which is cut off from and out of contact with the mental experiences of the other." Quoted in Restak, The Brain: The Last Frontier, p. 173.
13. Joseph Bogen, "The Other Side of the Brain I: Disgraphia and Discopia Following Cerebral Commissuratomy," Bulletin of the Los Angeles Neurological Society, vol. 34 (1969), 73-105.
14. See Joseph Bogen, "The Other Side of the Brain II: An Appositional Mind," Bulletin of the Los Angeles Neurological Society, vol. 34 (1969), 135-162, for an excellent discussion of the history and implications of the split-brain research.
15. Doreen Kimura, "The Asymmetry of the Human Brain," Scientific American, vol. 228 (1973), 70-78. The experiments utilized dichotic listening devices, which are special headphones that present different sounds to each ear, and tachistoscopes, optical instruments that isolate the left and right visual field in each eye.
16. Even a person blind in one eye or deaf in one ear is not "split-brain" because each eye and ear has both contralateral connections to the opposite cerebral hemisphere as well as ipsilateral connections to the brain hemisphere on the same side of the body. Although the contralateral connection is the stronger one, the role of the ipsilateral connection seems to have been overlooked by the split-brain research. See Walsh, Neuropsychology, pp. 27-68.
17. Blakeslee, The Right Brain, p. 143 (emphasis mine).

18. Ibid., p. 141. Research revealed that brain patients with right hemisphere damage could speak but only in a monotone voice that indicated a "reduced emotional capability."
19. Ibid., pp. 153-157. Stroke patients with left hemisphere damage could not speak articulately, but they could sing short phrases and use expletive curses.
20. See T. Alajouanine, "Aphasia and Artistic Realization," Brain, vol. 71 (1948), 229-241, where the famous French composer Maurice Ravel was the subject in a seminal study on music and cerebral lateralization. Ravel, who had suffered a stroke to the left cerebral hemisphere, could no longer read or write musical notation, although his ability to play music and sing from memory--his "aesthetic sensibility"--remained unaffected. Later split-brain research seemed to confirm that the perception of musical pitch and timbre was localized in the brain's right hemisphere. See Bogen, "The Other Side of the Brain II: An Appositional Mind," p. 105.
21. Doreen Kimura, "Left-right Differences in the Perception of Melodies," Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology, vol. 16 (1964), 355-358, and "Functional Asymmetry of the Brain in Dichotic Listening," Cortex, vol. 3 (1967), 163-178.
22. The Writings of William James, ed. by J. McDermott (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 155.
23. Dewey, How We Think, p. 140 (emphasis mine).
24. See Joseph Bogen, "The Other Side of the Brain VII: Some Educational Aspects of Hemispheric Specialization," UCLA Educator, vol 17 (1975), 24-32.
25. Linda Williams, Teaching for the Two-Sided Mind (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984); and Jane Cooke and Mildred Hapt, Thinking With the Whole Brain (West Haven, CT: NEA Professional Library, 1986).
26. See, for example, Richard Hopkins, "Education and the Right Hemisphere of the Brain: Thinking in Patterns for a Computer World," Journal of Thought, vol. 19 (1984), 104-114.
27. Quoted in Bogen, "The Other Side of the Brain VII: Some Educational Aspects of Hemispheric Specialization," p. 27.

28. Well before the split-brain theory became popular, Jerome Bruner wrote about the educational neglect of "left hand" learning, which, of course, is connected to the "right-brain"! Bruner was concerned with the artificial separation of what he saw as two distinct, though interrelated, modes of learning: "The elegant rationality of science and the metaphoric nonrationality of art operate with deeply different grammars; perhaps they even represent a profound complementarity." See Jerome Bruner, On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 74.
29. See Bogen, "The Other Side of the Brain VII: Some Educational Aspects of Hemispheric Specialization," p. 28, for a list of the many neurological as well as psychological dichotomies that preceded the split-brain.
30. Joseph Bogen, "The Other Side of the Brain III: The Corpus Collusum and Creativity," Bulletin of the Los Angeles Neurological Society, vol. 34 (1969), 191-220. For a more recent discussion of the relation between creativity and the brain, see Howard Gardner, Art, Mind, and Brain: A Cognitive Approach to Creativity (New York: Basic Books, 1982).
31. Betty Edwards, Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain (Los Angeles: J.P. Tarcher, 1979). Popular workshops on art and education have emerged from this book.
32. Barbara M. Vitale, Unicorns are Real: A Right-Brained Approach to Learning (New York: Warner Books, 1982).
33. See C. Lovejoy, "The Power of Holistic Education," Holistic Education Network Newsletter, March 1983.
34. Cf. Restak, The Brain: The Last Frontier, p. 176: "Each hemisphere is specialized for a different cognitive style--the left for the analytic, logical mode in which words are an excellent tool, and the right for a holistic, Gestalt mode."
35. Robert Ornstein, "The Split and the Whole Brain," Human Nature, vol. 1 (1978), p. 78.
36. J. Levy, quoted in Bogen, "The Other Side of the Brain II: An Appositional Mind," p. 111: "The mute, minor hemisphere is specialized for Gestalt perception, being primarily a synthesist in dealing with information input. The speaking, major hemisphere, in contrast, seems to operate in more logical, analytic, computer-like fashion, and the findings suggest that a possible reason for cerebral lateralization in man is basic incompatibility of language

functions on the one hand and synthetic perceptual functions on the other . . . . The two modes of thought are mutually inhibitory, and their evolutionary lateralization to different hemispheres was to prevent them from interacting detrimentally."

37. Bob Samples, The Metaphoric Mind (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1976).
38. See, for example, Bennett Reimer, "Education for Aesthetic Awareness: The Cleveland Area Project," Music Educators Journal, vol. 64 (1978), 66-69.
39. John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934), p. 22.
40. It is significant that Dewey developed this relation between "substance and form" in his philosophy of art as well as a similar connection between "subject matter and method" in his philosophy of education. See Ibid., pp. 106-133, and John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916), pp. 164-193.
41. Dewey, How We Think, p. 278.
42. J. Levy, "Research Synthesis on Right and Left Hemispheres: We Think with Both Sides of the Brain," Educational Leadership, vol. 40 (1983), 66-71. In attempting to rescue the right hemisphere from its nonintellectual status, Levy blurred the distinction between the two cognitive processes and identified the right-brain, too, as a "rule-governed plan of transformation" that requires abstraction and logic. Interestingly enough, this is the same researcher who once had argued that the two cognitive processes are fundamentally incompatible! (See note 36 above.)
43. Joe Green and Fredrick Silverman, "Aesthetic Education and the Plight of the Qualitative," Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science, vol. 5 (1980), p. 98.
44. Ornstein, "The Split and the Whole Brain," pp. 82-83.
45. George Leonard, "The Great School Reform Hoax: What's Really Needed to Improve Public education?" Esquire, April 1984, pp. 52, 56. Leonard's critique was directed toward the government sponsored "Nation at Risk" report, which helped initiate the current "back to basics" reform movement. See A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1983).

46. Dewey, Democracy and Education, pp. 246-247.

CHAPTER 5  
BEYOND DUALISM:  
A DEWEYAN CORRECTIVE TO THE MEANING OF THE AESTHETIC

Compared with what we ought to be, we are only half awake. Our fires are damped, our drafts are checked. We are making use of only a small part of our possible mental and physical resources.

William James

The logical problem of dualism discussed in the previous chapter embraces the chief conceptual problem of this study, which is to clarify the meaning and method of an aesthetic education. The purpose of this chapter is to reconstruct the idea of the aesthetic so that it can be embodied in the practice of schooling. Historically, however, the aesthetic has been defined dialectically, that is, as opposed to reason, intelligence, science, and now even the "left-brain." Indeed, the split-brain paradigm psychologizes the traditional philosophic distinction into a rigid dualism. The added danger is that such a bifurcation now appears to be backed by empirical scientific evidence. In contrast to such a static formal logic, a Deweyan method of inquiry focuses on the holistic context of experience. Thus, as one interpreter has noted, Dewey not only revealed the problem of dualism within present day culture, but he also sought to reconcile the source of such a division:



A mistrust of dualisms stood in the foreground of Dewey's philosophy throughout his life. He believed that the dualistic strain in modern philosophy resulted from a neglect of the context in which distinctions are instituted, and from a failure to appreciate the organic character of experience. This neglect of the context with its subsequent distortion of reality is the most pervasive fallacy in philosophic thinking.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, even though the distinction between them is appropriate, sense and thought are interrelated organically in the context of experience. The conceptual aim of this study, therefore, is not to equate the aesthetic and the intellect or to deny a logical distinction.<sup>2</sup> The goal, rather, is to integrate the two within the context of experience, that is, to develop the aesthetic quality of intelligence as well as the intellectual consequence of aesthetic experience. An accurate philosophic distinction can function, then, to illuminate this integration. Hence, the solution to the split-brain problem of dualism and the larger problem of aesthetic meaning is not found by collapsing appropriate logical distinctions or in creating vague generalizations. There is a functional difference between the aesthetic and the intellect--as there is between the two halves of the brain--yet the distinction itself functions as an organic whole rather than an unbridgeable split. Dewey succinctly and accurately described the correct nature of that distinction, as well as the reason why it so often is distorted, when he observed, in Art as Experience, that

The difference between the aesthetic and the intellectual is thus one of the place where emphasis falls. . . . [Yet] the ultimate matter of both emphases in experience is the same, as is also their general form. The odd notion that an artist does not think and a scientific inquirer does nothing else is the result of converting a difference of tempo and emphasis into a difference of kind.<sup>3</sup>

### A Deweyan Resolution to the Split-Brain

The general mistake of the split-brain model has been exactly to convert this organic, rhythmic difference of emphasis into a rigid, reified difference of kind. Of course, different situations or activities naturally will call for a different emphasis. Moreover, the different focus of aesthetic perception compared to intellectual conception symbolizes a similar distinction between the specialized functions of the twin hemispheres of the brain. More to the point, responsible inquiry must define the distinction before it can fully appreciate the interaction, which, again, is the ultimate aim of this study. In other words, a practical synthesis in action rests upon a clear theoretical analysis, and such conceptual clarification is, without doubt, the first task of philosophy.

Dewey's philosophy is fundamental to solving the logical problem of dualism and, thus, correcting the split-brain idea because it develops a holistic integration of the aesthetic and the intellect upon a clear analysis of their distinction. Consequently, the aesthetic represents the immediate and qualitative primacy of experience conveyed through emotion and sense; the intellect, on the other hand,

signifies the conceptual, symbolic, and abstract understanding of such immediately perceived phenomena, which, of course, is the function of science, language, and mathematics--the "basics" of schooling. Dewey described the difference between art as aesthetic immediacy and science as intellectual inquiry by clarifying that

Those who are called artists have for their subject-matter the qualities of things of direct experience; intellectual inquirers deal with these things at one remove, through the medium of symbols that stand for qualities but are not significant in their immediate presence.<sup>4</sup>

Qualitative aesthetic perception is distinguished by its immediacy, while intellectual conception mediates experience. Symbols such as words act as intellectual tools by carrying meaning in an abstract way. However, the point to remember is that the aesthetic also carries meaning, albeit in a different manner. Hence, aesthetic quality and reflective inquiry both function to catalyze intelligence as a whole. In an elegant poetic metaphor, Dewey described the unique way in which meaning--and, thus, intellectual value--is transmitted by the aesthetic:

Sense qualities are the carriers of meanings, not as vehicles carry goods but as a mother carries a baby when the baby is part of her own organism. Works of art, like words, are literally pregnant with meaning.<sup>5</sup>

The logical distinction between qualitative immediacy and conceptual mediation does not divorce the aesthetic from the intellect in the context of experience. Dewey acknowledged the difference that the split-brain symbolizes, for art does exercise a unique status compared to science and

logic. Yet Dewey also would argue that the analysis misleads if it then is interpreted as a dichotomy. As a corrective, Dewey developed the integrative idea that the work of art represents a special method of intelligence, an idea that suggests using art as a pedagogical means to achieve intellectual goals. From the other side, Dewey also emphasized the point that every scientific or reflective activity carries the potential for an immediate aesthetic expression and appreciation--another idea that has enormous value for transforming education. Simply put, thinking has its own intrinsic aesthetic quality. And it is this seminal Deweyan theme that both addresses and resolves the faulty logic of the split-brain dualism. Hence,

It is quite true that certain things, namely ideas, exercise a mediating function. But only a twisted and aborted logic can hold that because something is mediated, it cannot, therefore, be immediately experienced. The reverse is the case. We cannot grasp any idea, any organ of mediation, we cannot possess it in full force, until we have felt and sensed it, as much so as if it were an odor or color. . . . Different ideas have their different "feels," their immediate qualitative aspects, just as much as anything else.<sup>6</sup>

It is significant, then, that perhaps the most pernicious dualism preserved by the split-brain theory concerns the reification of "feeling" and its consequent opposition to ideas and reason. The distinction between head and heart is universal and ageless. However, the split-brain research has tended to crystallize emotion into the right cerebral hemisphere of the brain, an idea not unlike the old "faculty psychology," which, incidentally, was criticized by

both William James and John Dewey before the turn of the century.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the identification of emotion as an exclusive specialization of the "right-brain" is based on the assumption that certain cognitive processes and their conventional forms of expression are somehow more "emotional" than others.<sup>8</sup> Although music and painting certainly involve an emotional quality of experience, it is a mistake, for example, to assume that science, thought, and language do not.

In this context, it is worth noting that even the results of some split-brain experiments have contradicted the notion that music is exclusively a "right-brain" phenomenon. For example, it has been found that experienced musicians (compared to "naive listeners") can process music through their left cerebral hemispheres, thereby suggesting that the production and perception of music also involves the operation of "analytical" thought.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the rhythms of music can be processed by both sides of the brain.<sup>10</sup> These findings are significant because they imply that the creation and appreciation of music--like the art of teaching and learning--is far too dynamic an activity to be reduced simplistically to one or the other side of the brain. Indeed, all human behavior is characterized by a complex interaction of context and consciousness, engaging the individual simultaneously on a physical, emotional, and intellectual level. The distinction of these levels can function either to reveal a contextual whole or to force a mechanical schism.

From a Deweyan perspective, emotion is indeed a "mode of sense" and thus carries an immediate aesthetic quality.<sup>11</sup> But rather than being an isolated entity (which resides, for example, in one cerebral hemisphere), emotion signifies the organic and dynamic functioning of the whole psyche. It is emotion that literally "motivates" us through all the activities of daily life, whether those activities are chiefly work or play, art or science. In fact, the very word "emotion" contains the idea of motion within it; thus, it signifies the moving, changing, and permeating unity of experience as a qualitative whole.<sup>12</sup> Emotion, then, is so intimately and integrally embedded in the context of life that it cannot be abstracted from the situation in which it occurs. It is a mistake, in other words, to reify this ubiquitous "felt" quality into an isolated entity. Hence, it seems that Dewey remarkably anticipated the error of the split-brain concept when he observed that

Only the psychology that has separated things which in reality belong together holds that scientists and philosophers think while poets and painters follow their feelings. In both, and to the same extent in the degree in which they are of comparable rank, there is emotionalized thinking, and there are feelings whose substance consists of appreciated meanings and ideas.<sup>13</sup>

The social as well as psychological danger with the split-brain application is that it serves to strengthen the prejudice that divorces intellectual activity from emotional quality in schooling as well as in life in general. The Deweyan principle of integration acts as a corrective to the

split by recognizing that emotion propels ideas, and that ideas in turn guide emotion toward completion. Without an immediate aesthetic sense of self and world, the intellect has no material with which to build, direct, and resolve. As Dewey bluntly stated in How We Think, "in every case where reflective activity ensues there is a process of intellectualizing what at first is merely an emotional quality of the whole situation."<sup>14</sup> Thus, when Dewey outlined the five steps of reflective thinking (which, for him, also corresponded to the method of science), he began with the sense of a problem or a "felt difficulty" to be overcome.<sup>15</sup> Put simply, the "material of sense perception" vitally initiates all conceptual inquiry.<sup>16</sup> Even the academic activity of philosophy itself contains a certain "gut level" meaning and motivation.<sup>17</sup> Aristotle's famous comment that philosophy begins in wonder signifies a similar idea--namely, that an aesthetic sense of curiosity, awe, or mystery is the living wellspring for intellectual inquiry.<sup>18</sup>

The point is that if schooling is to be vital and complete, then educators should not divide it into either a cold "left-brain" logic or a creative "right-brain" art. A Deweyan perspective recognizes that intelligence functions organically to emerge from, and return to, the immediate realm of aesthetic quality. Rather than being isolated from one other, reason reconstructs the qualitative world of sense which then stimulates inquiry anew. In other words, our

emotional "sense" of the world naturally leads to the response of reflective thinking, which also "re-flects" back to clarify and enrich future perceptions. It is not a static or divisive operation (as signified by the split-brain), for thought without feeling is empty and mechanical, just as emotion without some reflection is merely a blind discharge. This is precisely why a genuinely complete and educational experience cannot be separated as either "right-brain" or "left-brain," emotional or intellectual, because such vital experiences always exhibit both characteristics. Dewey stated it simply:

It is not possible to divide in a vital experience the . . . emotional and intellectual from one another and to set the properties of one over against the characteristics of the other. The emotional phase binds parts together into a single whole; intellectual simply names the fact that the experience has meaning.<sup>19</sup>

However, as shown in the previous chapter, the problem is that many psychologists and educators do subscribe to a logic that sets off intelligence from the aesthetic qualities of emotion, intuition, and imagination. In contrast, the Deweyan idea of "qualitative thought" reveals that "intuition," for example, functions to propel inquiry, while reason acts to verify and complete intuitive insight.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, although "image-ination" (literally, the birthing of images) is certainly an aesthetic act, it cannot be opposed to reason because it also functions to enlarge and enrich our intellectual understanding of the world. For Dewey, the imagination complements the logical and the practical; hence,



it acts to assist thought rather than signify the commonly degraded notion of mere fantasy or idle daydreaming.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, if intuitive insight and imaginative production are considered nonintellectual and are ignored as effective methods of education, then schooling will miss an opportunity to revitalize itself. A creative aesthetic vision or imagination is vital to all life, and it functions not exclusively within art but rather imbues every activity, including education, with artistic quality. As Dewey put it in Democracy and Education, "The imagination is the medium of appreciation in every field. . . . the only thing that makes any activity more than mechanical."<sup>22</sup> This means that all subjects of schooling, especially the academic subjects of language, mathematics, and science, will be more vitally appreciated--that is, more aesthetic--to the degree that a creative, imaginative disposition contributes to their study and development. Image and idea are as bound together in scientific discovery as in artistic creation.<sup>23</sup>

Still another difficulty for education and society concerns the split-brain idea that divorces art as a holistic "synthesis" from science as a logical "analysis." Art does express a unity within variety, forming a synthesis of diverse images, sounds, shapes, or other aesthetic forms into a cohesive and unified whole; and science is based on the analytical reduction of nature into its constituent elements. But as Dewey again pointed out, the cognitive processes of

analysis and synthesis actually complement one another in every complete intellectual activity.<sup>24</sup> Hence, the common cognitive (as well as social) dualism of art versus science is erroneous.

Although science involves analysis, it nevertheless develops from a qualitative context, or sense of the whole, and moves toward a greater understanding of that whole. In other words, science also aims toward a synthesis, an integrative placing in context of the analyzed elements or processes. Likewise, while the method of art embodies a coherent synthesis of its formal elements, it too requires that those elements be distinguished and evaluated, or technically analyzed, in order to determine their contribution and relationship to the work as a whole. The split-brain model, then, seems to ignore Dewey's warning about "the folly of trying to set analysis and synthesis over against each other."<sup>25</sup>

Summing up, the recognition of unity within the context of experience signifies the resolution to the split-brain theory. A nondualistic Deweyan perspective reveals that the aesthetic in experience both suggests and regulates reflective thinking, while thought aims to complete and refine our sensibility (literally, "sense-ability") to and of the world. A qualitative aesthetic perception is the ground and goal that binds and guides the movement of reason. Sense feeds thought and feeling glues the intellect, while thought

completes aesthetic awareness and reason gives meaning to emotion. An organic method of inquiry thus provides a resource for discovering how thinking--as well as schooling--can embody the aesthetic quality of art; otherwise, such activities can become anaesthetic and artificial. It is significant that Dewey not only provided a logic for resolving the split-brain dualism, but he also pointed to the practical necessity of aesthetic quality within the formation of intelligence:

Hence an experience of thinking . . . . has a satisfying emotional quality because it possesses internal integration and fulfillment reached through ordered and organized movement. This artistic structure may be immediately felt. In so far, it is aesthetic. What is even more important is that not only is this quality a significant motive in undertaking intellectual inquiry and in keeping it honest, but that no intellectual activity is an integral event (is an experience), unless it is rounded out with this quality. Without it, thinking is inconclusive. In short, aesthetic cannot be sharply marked off from intellectual experience since the later must bear an aesthetic stamp to be itself complete.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, the split-brain theory usually is interpreted in a way that sharply marks off the aesthetic from the intellect along psychological and educational (not to mention cerebral) lines. Consequently, the theory can serve to integrate schooling and society only if it is used to discover art as an intellectual method. When the art experience is connected to its social, historical, and rational bearings, art education is transformed. Of equal importance, when the basic academic subjects of the curriculum are transfused with a vivid aesthetic quality, general

education as a whole becomes vitally illuminated and unified, thereby renewing the enthusiasm for teaching and learning. Thus, schooling need not be replaced or even supplemented by "aesthetic" (or "right-brain") studies that are added to the normal curriculum. Education could be transformed simply by uncovering the vital aesthetic potential that resides within all current school subjects.

### The Significance of Qualitative Thinking

The idea of a pervasive and underlying quality that regulates the development of a vital experience is one of the major themes in Dewey's philosophy. The primary characteristic of artistic creation and aesthetic perception is this sense of qualitative unity. Furthermore, aesthetic quality permeates the source, goal, and thread of all reflective thinking! Hence, the intellectual character of art as well as the artistic quality of intellectual inquiry is signified by the seminal Deweyan idea of "qualitative thought".<sup>27</sup> Qualitative thinking refers to the ways in which the immediate aesthetic perception of relations contributes to the process and products of intelligence.

The concept of qualitative thinking is significant because it resolves the specific problem of the split-brain as well as the larger historical dualism between the aesthetic and the intellect. Indeed, the term itself is integrative, unifying the intellectual conduct of thinking with the immediacy of qualitative perception. Moreover, as Dewey

accurately noted, "if we designate this permeating qualitative unity in psychological language, we say it is felt rather than thought."<sup>28</sup> This tendency to psychologize helps account for the traditional logical error by which aesthetic quality and, hence, intuition, imagination, and even creativity are identified with the immediacy of emotion or "feeling" and falsely split off from the characteristics of reason and intelligence.

As already indicated, the aesthetic is unique and logically distinct from the symbolic operations of science or language. The artist (as well as the perceiver of art) works primarily in the qualitative immediacy of colors, sounds, shapes, textures, and so forth, while scientific and intellectual inquirers deal with symbolic operations that evolve out of a certain distance or abstraction from these same aesthetic qualities. The work of art, then, is distinguished by the heightened control that the immediately felt qualitative context exerts on the conscious direction and development of such an experience; yet this work also signifies an orderly and cumulative process, that is, a process of thought.<sup>29</sup> The unifying content of all art is the immediate quality of direct experience, but the point is that this aesthetic quality, as Dewey observed, also carries its own unique intellectual value that cannot be reduced to conceptual terms:

Thinking directly in terms of colors, tones, images, is a different operation technically from thinking in words. But only superstition will hold that, because the meaning of paintings and symphonies cannot be translated into words, or that of poetry into prose, therefore thought is monopolized by the latter. If all meanings could be adequately expressed by words, the arts of painting and music would not exist. There are values and meanings that can be expressed only by immediately visible and audible qualities, and to ask what they mean in the sense of something that can be put into words is to deny their distinctive existence.<sup>30</sup>

However, if intelligence is identified only with symbolic, conceptual, and propositional meanings, rather than also including the immediate qualitative relations of sense perception, then our vision of social and educational practice becomes narrowly one sided. Although the substance of thought differs in art and science, from qualitative to quantitative degrees, each activity functions as a means to intellect as a whole. Thus, Dewey developed the idea that the work of art embodies a form of qualitative thinking that is no less rigorous or demanding than conceptual thought. This means that

Any idea that ignores the necessary role of intelligence in production of works of art is based upon identification of thinking with use of one special kind of material, verbal signs and words. To think effectively in terms of relations of qualities is as severe a demand upon thought as to think in terms of symbols, verbal and mathematical.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps more importantly, Dewey also developed the idea that the vivid qualitative characteristic inherent in the work of art epitomizes the operation of intelligence in all forms of reflective inquiry. Hence,

The logic of artistic construction and aesthetic appreciation is peculiarly significant because they exemplify in accentuated and purified form the . . . integration by a qualitative whole. . . . Artistic thought is not however unique in this respect but only shows an intensification of a characteristic of all thought.<sup>32</sup>

In other words, the role of intelligence itself is directly dependent on the same immediate, aesthetic quality that defines the work of art. The qualitative in thought means that "the immediate existence of quality, and of dominant and pervasive quality, is the background, the point of departure, and the regulative principle of all thinking."<sup>33</sup> Consequently, without this sense of quality--as an immediate aesthetic perception--thought itself, in any form, could not exist. Furthermore, all inquiry depends on some sense of a felt problem or perplexity to be overcome, which also is a qualitative perception.

Something presents itself as problematic before there is recognition of what the problem is. The problem is had or experienced before it can be stated or set forth; but it is had as an immediate quality of the whole situation. The sense of something problematic, of something perplexing and to be resolved, marks the presence of something pervading all elements and considerations. Thought is the operation by which it is converted into pertinent and coherent terms.<sup>34</sup>

Intellectual, as well as educational, motivation always begins with some immediate qualitative "feel" for the situation upon which inquiry can build, direct, and resolve. Even advanced scientific research never gets away from its qualitative context; yet, as Dewey noted, "failure to recognize this fact is the source of a large part of the artificial problems and fallacies that infect our theory of

knowledge."<sup>35</sup> One such fallacy is the mechanical use of the split-brain idea, which then infects psychology, philosophy, and education. The point is that all thinking, whatever its content, is aesthetic to the degree that it cannot be divorced from the immediate apprehension of a certain qualitative aspect. And not only does this aesthetic quality impel the movement of the intellect, as a felt difficulty to be overcome, but it perseveres through to the consummation of thought as well. In other words, qualitative existence also represents the goal of inquiry, that is, a satisfactory "felt" resolution to the original problem. Without the quality of art, thought as a whole becomes wooden and artificial. Indeed, when stripped of its aesthetic potential, thinking becomes anaesthetic and, hence, uneducative. Consequently,

Whenever an idea loses its immediate felt quality, it ceases to be an idea and becomes, like an algebraic symbol, a mere stimulus to execute an operation without the need of thinking. For this reason certain trains of ideas leading to their appropriate consummation are beautiful or elegant. They have aesthetic character . . . . When there is genuine artistry in scientific inquiry and philosophic speculation, a thinker proceeds neither by rule nor yet blindly, but by means of meanings that exist immediately as feelings having qualitative color.<sup>36</sup>

The idea of qualitative thinking thus carries enormous value for the practice of education. Even though scientific, logical, and so called "left-brain" thinking always entails a qualitative factor, this aesthetic element too often is ignored (if not denied) in the process of schooling. Yet the intellectual aims of education act ultimately to reconstruct



and recreate the qualitative world of sense, which then functions to perceive new perplexities and so stimulate new inquiries of learning. Thus, as qualitative aesthetic perception is refined, through sensitivity and awareness, the greater will be the potential for the movement and directions of thought. The consummations of thinking, in turn, will reflect back to expand and enrich the aesthetic ground of intelligence.

In sum, genuine aesthetic activity always embodies intelligence, while all reflective thinking is rounded out and regulated by its qualitative, aesthetic aspect. The subject matter of schooling may focus on the qualitative, as do the arts and even the humanities, or it can accent the logical and quantitative, as do mathematics, history, language, and science. But the practical problem of integration concerns how to incorporate the arts as intellectual instruments while also discovering the social and natural sciences as methods of aesthetic expression. Furthermore, since qualitative and conceptual thinking complement one another, so can artistic and scientific activities do so within the school curriculum. To the degree that these two cognitive as well as social methods of inquiry cooperate, the more powerful and profound will be the whole of intelligence. Consequently, the practical issue facing educators will be to elicit the qualitatively aesthetic in the basic academic disciplines while presenting art, music, and even physical and vocational

education in ways that will provoke reflection and intellectual inquiry.

#### Qualitative Unity--The Aesthetic as the Agent of Integration

The larger meaning of the aesthetic that this study aims to develop is to signify more than merely artistic beauty or even sense perception. Rather, the aim is to develop the idea of an aesthetic quality that potentially pervades and unites all of experience. For Dewey, the existential immediacy of such an integrative quality is what makes an experience to be an experience. An immediately apprehended and, thus, aesthetic quality permeates every vital and complete experience, acting to "circumscribe a situation externally and integrate it internally."<sup>37</sup>

The aesthetic, therefore, functions as the pervasive integrative agent within each and every meaningful experience, whether that experience is specifically one of art or science, labor or leisure. Moreover, it is precisely this unifying function that best defines the meaning of the aesthetic, for "no experience of whatever sort is a unity unless it has aesthetic quality."<sup>38</sup> Consequently, as the intrinsic glue of every vital experience, the logical context of the aesthetic is located best in contrast with its existential opposite, the "anaesthetic"--an idea that (as we shall see in the next chapter) also uncovers the full moral meaning of aesthetic experience.

From a Deweyan pragmatic perspective, aesthetic quality belongs not only to some special type of experience; but, rather, it signifies "the clarified and intensified development of traits that belong to every normally complete experience."<sup>39</sup> Experience carries no predestined value that makes it either aesthetic, intellectual, practical, or moral. On the contrary, the meanings that these words signify are interrelated in the context of living and thus exist together within every vitally complete experience. Because "artistic and aesthetic quality is implicit in every normal experience," it is not a question of some activities being inherently more aesthetic than others.<sup>40</sup> Thus, the nature of the larger social problem, as Dewey succinctly put it, becomes "that of recovering the continuity of aesthetic experience with normal processes of living."<sup>41</sup> From the standpoint of schooling in particular, the problem becomes that of recovering the continuity of aesthetic potential within every aspect of school life.

Consequently, this study uses the idea of the aesthetic not only as the unifying process and perception of specific art forms but also as the integrative quality within every vital activity. As Dewey observed, "Art is a quality that permeates experience; it is not, save by a figure of speech, the experience itself."<sup>42</sup> While painting a picture or performing a play certainly constitute what we commonly think of as art, so too does writing an essay or doing

scientific research become artistic to the degree that such acts signify the perception of a certain aesthetic quality that directs and unifies the experience in a cumulative and comprehensive way. The potential for aesthetic experience resides within every form of activity, whether it is more immediate and physical as in dance, exercise, and even manual labor, or is more mediated and intellectual as in much of academic learning. More importantly, not only does the quality of art reside in any experience that elicits an absorbed integration of self and world, mind and matter, process and product, but only such experiences are vitally meaningful and, hence, educational.

What this means for schooling is that by recognizing and consciously enhancing the qualitative context of the learning environment, education can become more immediately appreciated and, indeed, "relevant." The aesthetic in education is not restricted to specific subjects (although the arts, as we shall see in a later chapter, provide an obvious foundation), but embraces the immediately felt background and method of teaching and learning as a whole. In fact, every experience is pregnant with the potential for art, that is, aesthetic potential, and it must elicit that potential in order to be vital and cohesive. For any experience to be intellectually coherent as well as pedagogically vital, it must contain a certain aesthetic quality. The practice of aesthetic education, then, begins with the recognition that we

must address the immediate qualitative experience of students --and teachers--in the act of schooling.

It is also highly significant that, in addition to its educational bearings, a renewed meaning of the aesthetic can help to reconstruct the activity of philosophy itself. In Experience and Nature, Dewey introduced aesthetic meaning into a general philosophic framework by suggesting that the experience of art most fully embodies the fundamental unity inherent in all lived experience.<sup>43</sup> In other words, the significance of art as experience is that it reflects and refines the human potential for aesthetic experience, which by definition is experience itself in its wholeness and integrity. It is therefore no coincidence that when Dewey later developed his philosophy of art, in Art as Experience, he claimed that aesthetic inquiry offers the greatest challenge to philosophy in general, for "aesthetic experience is experience in its integrity," and thus to it "the philosopher must go to understand what experience is."<sup>44</sup>

The aesthetic functions as the theoretical as well as practical agent of integration. Dewey had found in the metaphor of art a means to dissolve the very dualisms that have so plagued Western thought. As a lived "consummatory" experience, the work of art signifies the integrity--the integration--of experience as a whole; hence, it unites the traditional dualisms between means and ends, subject and object, process and product, thinking and feeling, as well as

the current left-brain/right-brain split! Furthermore, as already noted in the second chapter, it seems ironic that one such dualism even concerns the conceptual meaning of the "aesthetic" in its relation to "art."

To reiterate, the traditional distinction that defines art as an active doing or making of objects, while the aesthetic is defined as the internal or subjective perception of such objective forms, can be problematic.<sup>45</sup> Clearly, the making of music or visual art is a creative "ex-pression," a pressing outward, that signifies an active, centrifugal energy. (And the word "art" itself originally did refer to such skill in doing or making.) Likewise, the aesthetic perception of beauty in artifacts, as well as in nature, suggests a creative "im-pression," an internalized sense of reception or appreciation. The problem, however, is that the distinction can lead to (or support) a rigid formal dualism between subject and object, mind and matter, active and passive, self and world. Yet, as Dewey noted, the function of art as aesthetic experience is defined precisely by a lived organic unity that belies any conceptual bifurcation:

The uniquely distinguishing feature of aesthetic experience is exactly the fact that no . . . distinction of self and object exists in it, since it is aesthetic in the degree in which organism and environment cooperate to institute an experience in which the two are so fully integrated that each disappears.<sup>46</sup>

Although art as objective product and the aesthetic as subjective process are appropriate logical distinctions, the experience that each word signifies occurs in a unified

context; hence, each meaning is incomplete without the function of the other. Dewey referred to this peculiar conceptual problem when he wrote that "since artistic refers primarily to the act of production and aesthetic to that of perception and enjoyment, the absence of a term designating the two processes taken together is unfortunate."<sup>47</sup> Thus, the semantic distinction between art and the aesthetic is useful only to the degree that it enhances the understanding of the gestalt in which both participate, for to perceive aesthetically is itself a recreation of art, while the making of artifacts, in turn, epitomizes aesthetic experience.

For the purpose of this study, therefore, the "aesthetic" signifies the unified process of production and perception that characterizes both the specific forms of art as well as experience itself in its integrity. Any creative activity (whether of art or science) demands the open and vital attitude of aesthetic perception. Similarly, every act of aesthetic cognition and interpretation (whether of nature or artifacts) imitates the work of art to the degree that the experience effects a transformation of that person's vision and perspective. Consequently, the meaning of the aesthetic as embodying the work of art--within any experience--signifies the holistic integration of the dualisms that still haunt both philosophy and education.

The aesthetic functions as a practical agent of personal integration by unifying perception, feeling, thought,

and action in the individual's creation and recreation of the work of art. Moreover, the aesthetic also can act as a social catalyst to integrate the activities in culture that presently are segregated into art and science, work and play, labor and leisure. Not surprisingly, this Deweyan idea that the aesthetic unites the self with society has been criticized on the grounds that if the work of art is "subjectively" recreated by each individual perceiver, then it cannot also function as an "objective" vehicle providing a community of common experience.<sup>48</sup> The criticism again reflects another dualism that separates the personal creation and appreciation of art from its social function as a vehicle for communicating and expressing our shared human experience. Rather than illuminate the integrative context of art, the distinction implies still another dichotomy, this time between the individual and the social, or the private and the public domain.

When this dualism is translated to education, it functions narrowly either to view the aesthetic as a purely individual experience, thus restricting its use as a method of social understanding, or else, by viewing art only as a public artifact conveying already agreed upon meanings, it restricts the present possibilities of new individual interpretations. From a Deweyan perspective, in contrast, the work of art inherently connects the individual's creative production and perception with the social ideas and values that the aesthetic



functions to communicate, carry, and create. Society could not exist without individuals, just as each person's individual experience is shaped by forms of social interaction.

The point is that the work of art best exemplifies the interdependence between self and society because it is both an individual recreation of experience and a potent public vehicle of communication. Indeed, art so vividly communicates our shared values and experiences--our common humanity--precisely because it is a uniquely private and individual activity! The fact that we have subjective, individual experience provides the mutual common ground through which we can share a common sense of the world. And, as we shall examine in the next chapter, it is this personal and social function of communication that best illuminates the immense moral as well as practical value of the work of art.

In conclusion, it is aesthetic inquiry or the philosophy of art that can clarify an organic, dynamic, and nondualistic method of inquiry--the general method that informs this entire work. That is why Dewey pointed out that a correct understanding of art and aesthetic experience "solves more problems which have troubled philosophers and resolves more hard and fast dualisms than any other theme of thought."<sup>49</sup> Art has profound meaning for philosophy as well as for education. The aesthetic functions not only to unify the whole person but also to integrate the social fabric of culture. Indeed, the meaning of the aesthetic is empty unless

it is used or applied to the vital functions of society, such as schooling. Hence,

A philosophy of art is sterilized unless it makes us aware of the function of art in relation to other modes of experience, and unless it indicates why this function is so inadequately realized, and unless it suggests the conditions under which the office would be successfully performed.<sup>50</sup>

#### Notes:

1. R. Bernstein, ed., John Dewey On Experience, Nature and Freedom (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), pp. xxi-xxii.
2. Modern philosophers often describe art in peculiarly cognitive terms, developing the idea of aesthetic knowledge, for example, or defining art as a special type of logical language. See Louis Arnaud Reid, "Art: Feeling and Knowing," Journal of Philosophy of Education, vol. 15, no. 1 (1981), 43-52; Nelson Goodman, Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1976); and Suzanne Langer, Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942). However, using a linguistic or analytic method risks reducing art to a prosaic cognitive logic that collapses the distinction between art and science--resulting, ironically, in a style of inquiry that lacks the sense of poetry that the philosophy of art requires.
3. John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934), p. 15.
4. Ibid., p. 73. Cf. also p. 134: "Art expresses, it does not state; it is concerned with existences in their perceived qualities, not with conceptions symbolized in terms." Significantly, for the poet, words themselves can become the qualitative medium--directly integrating perception and conception--because poetry combines the abstract meaning of language as word symbols with the immediate sense of rhythm, sound, and meter.
5. Ibid., p. 118.
6. Ibid., pp. 119-120.
7. See Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, & Co., 1978; orig. pub. 1935), p. 506. Both James and Dewey endorsed an organic, "functionalist" psychology and rejected the static theory

of mind that located mental "faculties" in certain parts of the brain!

8. The split-brain psychology, which identifies the right half of the cerebral cortex as the "emotional" part of the brain, seems to contradict research that links the limbic system, an evolutionary older part of the brain, with emotion. See Paul MacLean, "A Mind of Three Minds: Educating the Triune Brain," in Education and the Brain: The Seventy-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, ed. by J. Chall and A. Mirsky (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 336.
9. See T. Bever and R. Chiarello, "Cerebral Dominance in Musicians and Nonmusicians," Science, vol. 185 (1974), 537-539, who concluded that "the previously reported superiority of the right hemisphere for music as being due to the use of musically naive subjects who treat simple melodies as unanalyzed wholes."
10. See H. Gordon, "Hemispheric Asymmetries in the Perception of Musical Chords," Cortex, vol. 6 (1970), 387-398, who found that while the right hemisphere processes musical chords, which are simultaneous patterns of pitches, both brain hemispheres can process the temporal sequencing of melody and rhythm.
11. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 30.
12. See Ibid., p. 42: "Emotion is the moving and cementing force . . . . it thus provides qualitative unity in and through the varied parts of an experience. . . . Experience is emotional but there are no separate things called emotions in it."
13. Ibid., p. 73.
14. John Dewey, How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1933), p. 109.
15. Ibid., pp. 106-107.
16. Cf. Ibid., p. 179: "Conceptions are the intellectual instrumentalities that are brought to bear upon the material of sense perception."
17. See Robert Sherman, "Philosophy with Guts," Journal of Thought, vol. 20, no. 2 (Summer 1985), 3-11.

18. Aristotle, Metaphysics (Book I), in Greek Philosophy: Thales to Aristotle, 2d ed., ed. by R. Allen (New York: The Free Press, 1985), pp. 307-311. Aristotle argued (in contrast to Plato) that human knowledge results directly from and through empirical sense perception. Dewey, who in many ways extended the comprehensive and pragmatic vision of Aristotle, also had commented on the aesthetic value of "wonder" for reflective inquiry. See Dewey, How We Think, p. 52.
19. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 55.
20. See John Dewey, "Qualitative Thought" (1931), in John Dewey On Experience, Nature and Freedom, ed. by R. Bernstein (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), p. 184: "Thinking and theorizing about physical matters set out from an intuition, and reflection . . . consists in an ideational and conceptual transformation of what begins as an intuition."
21. See Dewey, How We Think, p. 214: "The healthy imagination deals not with the unreal, but with the mental realization of what is suggested. Its exercise is not a flight into the purely fanciful and ideal, but a method of expanding and filling in what is real."
22. John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916), p. 236.
23. Einstein, for example, had noted that his work consisted of a connection between the "combinatory play" of visual images with the appropriate scientific concepts. See The Creative Process, ed. by Brewster Ghiselin (New York: New American Library, 1952), pp. 43-44.
24. Dewey, How We Think, pp. 129, 131: "As analysis is emphasis, so synthesis is placing; the one causes the emphasized fact or property to stand out as significant; the other puts what is selected in its context, its connection with what is signified. . . . This intimate interaction between selective emphasis and interpretation through a context of what is selected is found wherever reflection proceeds normally."
25. Ibid., p. 131.
26. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 38.
27. The original source is found in John Dewey, Philosophy and Civilization (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1931), pp. 93-116.

28. Dewey, "Qualitative Thought," p. 187.
29. See Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 16: "The artist has his problems and thinks as he works. But his thought is more immediately embodied in the object. . . . The artist does his thinking in the very qualitative media he works in, and the terms lie so close to the object that he is producing that they merge directly into it."
30. Ibid., pp. 73-74.
31. Ibid., p. 46.
32. Dewey, "Qualitative Thought," pp. 186-187.
33. Ibid., p. 198.
34. Ibid., pp. 181-182.
35. Ibid., p. 198.
36. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 120. Interestingly enough, the same idea was echoed by a fifteen year old national mathematics contest winner who remarked, "It's harmonious when you get a solution. . . . Math holds an aesthetic appeal, to see problems when they are done elegantly." Quoted in Coming to our Senses: The Significance of the Arts for American Education, David Rockefeller, chairman of the Arts, Education, and Americans panel (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1977), p. 95.
37. Dewey, "Qualitative Thought," p. 182.
38. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 40.
39. Ibid., p. 46.
40. Ibid., pp. 12-13.
41. Ibid., p. 10.
42. Ibid., p. 326.
43. John Dewey, Experience and Nature (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1925), pp. 358-361. For the chronological development of Dewey's theory of art, see George Dykhuizen, The Life and Mind of John Dewey (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), pp. 209-213.
44. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 274. Dewey wrote an entire chapter on the "Challenge to Philosophy" that the study of art presents, and he ended the chapter (p. 297) with a

sentence that contained the title of the book: "The significance of art as experience is, therefore, incomparable for the adventure of philosophic thought."

45. John Dewey, "Experience, Nature, and Art" (1925), in John Dewey on Education, ed. by R.D. Archambault (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 157- 165.
46. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 249. It is interesting to note that the idea of integrating (or "transcending") the dualism of mind and matter is akin to a more metaphysical interpretation of art, which Dewey seemed to shun. This mystical and often nonWestern perspective views the highest function of art as a religious union of self with object, of the perceiver with the perceived. See, for example, K.C. Pandey, "Indian Aesthetics," in History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, vol. 1, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1952), pp. 472-487; and W. Mahoney, "The Artist as Yogi, The Yogi as Artist: Contemplation and the Creative Process," Parabola, vol. 13, no. 1 (Feb. 1988), 68-79.
47. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 46. Cf. also p. 53: "Aesthetic perception is an act of the going-out of energy in order to receive, not a withholding of energy. To steep ourselves in a subject matter we have first to plunge into it. When we are only passive to a scene it overwhelms us. We must summon energy and pitch it at a responsive key in order to take in."
48. C.M. Smith, "The Aesthetics of John Dewey and Aesthetic Education," Educational Theory, vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 1971), p. 142, writes, "If the work of art is what each percipient freely creates during his interaction with the art object . . . it is not easy to imagine how anything this ineffable and irretrievable could contribute to a community of experience and a sharing of meanings." See also D.W. Gotshalk, "On Dewey's Aesthetics," The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, vol. 23, no. 1 (Fall 1964), 131-138, whom Smith cites for his critique of Dewey.
49. Dewey, Experience and Nature, pp. 392-393.
50. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 12.

CHAPTER 6  
RECONSTRUCTING A PRAGMATIC AESTHETIC:  
A DEWEYAN APPROACH TO THE MORAL FUNCTION OF ART

The only alternative to a reactionary return to the educational traditions of the past lies in working out the intellectual possibilities resident in various arts, crafts, and occupations, and reorganizing the curriculum accordingly. Here, more than elsewhere, are found the means by which the blind and routine experience of the race may be transformed into illuminated and emancipated experiment.

John Dewey

The aim of this study goes beyond simply renewing the theory of the aesthetic, for it remains incomplete unless the practice of the aesthetic also is renewed and enacted in conduct. The quality of art can transform the activity of teaching and learning. The aim of this chapter, then, is to develop the practical purpose and value of the aesthetic--which signifies the moral function of art in education and culture. A Deweyan approach to the aesthetic again is useful because it helps clear up the moral problems and values associated with art that were discussed in the third chapter.

To begin with, Dewey's whole approach is grounded in a comprehensive and consistent philosophy of experience. The conceptual integration of artistic production with aesthetic perception (discussed in the previous chapter) is derived from the organic, rhythmic exchange of centrifugal and centripetal

energies within experience itself.<sup>1</sup> Dewey consequently based not just his aesthetic inquiry but also his theory of education and his theory of epistemology on an experiential method of inquiry that unifies the traditional theoretical split between our outer "doings" and inner "undergoings."<sup>2</sup> The point is that the reciprocal relation between art and the aesthetic is more than merely semantic; it is also a pragmatic relationship that influences conduct.

The artist embodies in himself the attitude of the perceiver while he works. . . . [And] to perceive, a beholder must create his own experience. . . . With the perceiver, as with the artist, there must be an ordering of the elements of the whole . . . . Without an act of recreation the object is not perceived as a work of art . . . . There is work done on the part of the percipient as there is on the part of the artist.<sup>3</sup>

From this integrative perspective, the experience of art, when complete, is always an aesthetic experience, just as any experience that is genuinely aesthetic signifies the process, if not also the product, of art. In practical terms, every working artist fully embodies the conduct of aesthetic perception by taking in, interpreting, and transforming the creative medium, and through it experience as well. Similarly, the genuine aesthetic spectator or perceiver literally recreates the work of art through interpreting the external objects of art (or nature) and, thus, shaping and transforming experience. Creating art embodies aesthetic perception, while aesthetic experience initiates, directs, and consummates the work of art. The issue is not simply to repeat the conceptual connection of art with the aesthetic,



but to indicate that the connection itself signifies a certain practical and, indeed, moral meaning.

The transformation of experience through the practice of aesthetic perception and creation is, in effect, a moral act that unites qualitative thought with human conduct. Any form of art is vital and meaningful only to the degree that it is perceived and created through a sense of immediate worth. When art lacks this aesthetic vitality, it becomes overly technical, academic, and laborious--that is, "art-ificial"--or else it becomes overly superficial, shallow, and "sensationalized." Such evaluations again imply moral meanings. Every complete aesthetic experience signifies a creation or, better still, a "re-creation" of life and self, thereby reproducing the work of art. If a perceptual experience lacks this vital quality of meaningful recreation, then, even though it is immediate, it remains incomplete and in a practical sense anaesthetic!

Experience carries aesthetic and artistic, as well as pragmatic, value to the degree that it is emotionally attended, intellectually complete, and internally unified. The same qualities seem to characterize education at its best; hence, the pragmatic value of art as experience also bears a moral meaning for the practice of schooling. A complete aesthetic education cultivates the ability to sense or perceive the world with clarity and openness, in order then to conceive it critically and creatively. In other words, human

creativity occurs as much through knowing how to perceive--and act--in the world as knowing how to make things in it!<sup>4</sup>

Aesthetic education as well as philosophic thought depend on a flexible and open minded attitude--which signifies a moral disposition. Consequently, even though the great works of art and philosophy and culture exist as finished products of the past, we must recreate them in the present through an aesthetic process of appreciation and inquiry. This activity requires and also accomplishes a vital cleansing of the doors of perception. And such a cleansing always affects conduct and action. In fact, the philosopher Nietzsche, who sought to develop this moral meaning of the aesthetic in education, pointed out that in order to teach students how to think critically we first must teach them how to see!<sup>5</sup>

#### The Work of Art as Moral Action

The work of art occurs not only when an artist creates but also when an individual perceives an experience to be integrated through aesthetic quality. The idea of the discipline and work of art is one key, then, to clarifying the moral (as well as conceptual) meaning of the aesthetic. The idea signifies more than merely the external objects of art, that is, artifacts.<sup>6</sup> Semantically, the phrase "work of art" refers both to the internalized activity of creating (or "working") art as well as to the finished product or "art-work." It also implies the "re-working" that occurs each time

an artifact is aesthetically appreciated and interpreted. Moreover, the meanings are interrelated: the noun, a "work" as a finished product, would not signify what it does without the meaning of the verb, "to work," as a purposeful process of expression and appreciation. The organic relation between action and outcome that is indicated by "the work of art" resolves the traditional split between process and product, or means and ends, which still plagues much of philosophy.

Certainly, it is in the usual meaning of "artwork," referring to the specific products of art, where aesthetic experience is most obviously concentrated and exemplified. But the larger moral meaning is that any experience becomes vitally alive and aesthetic to the degree that it embodies both the playful creative attitude and the genuine hard work inherent in art. The work of art integrates the internal aesthetic process with the external product of art. The concept unites vital interest with concentrated effort, signifying the discipline of artwork as well as the art of disciplined labor. It is no coincidence, then, that the phrase "work of art" recurs so frequently in Dewey's aesthetic inquiry; it also reflects his intellectual debt to Hegel, who used it in the same organic way.<sup>7</sup>

But how does art function--or work--to affect thought and conduct and, thus, carry moral meaning? In the third chapter it was shown that the moral meaning of art in culture appears ambiguous and controversial. Hence, it is necessary

first to indicate the way in which the work of art carries a moral purpose for society, in order to reconstruct its pragmatic pedagogical function. Put simply, the varied forms of aesthetic expression that constitute the artifacts of culture contain a concrete embodiment of a society's values, ideas, and attitudes, and therein lies art's inherent moral quality. As Hegel pointed out, "It is in works of art that nations have deposited the profoundest intuitions and ideas. . . . and art is the key to the understanding of their wisdom and their religion."<sup>8</sup> In the same vein, Dewey once wrote that the "continuity of culture in passage from one civilization to another as well as within the culture is conditioned by art more than by any other one thing."<sup>9</sup>

Art effects the evolution and cements the continuity of culture because it is the most emotionally charged and immediate--that is, aesthetic--medium for the transmission of thought and feeling. Rather than being simply an aloof and elite social cosmetic, in which case art degenerates into a mere "beauty parlor of civilization," the moral office of the aesthetic is to carry and construct cultural as well as personal value.<sup>10</sup> This means that the ethical quality and potential of art reside in its function as the most intense, focused, and immediate vehicle for human communication. Dewey stated bluntly, "Art is the most effective mode of communication that exists."<sup>11</sup>

The word "communication" signifies the process of sharing what we hold in "common," implying a common moral ground for thought, feeling, and action. Communication is the social cement of every form of human "community," including the community of teachers and students formed within every school.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the work of art can create a private as well as public sense of "communion," which again reveals a moral (and perhaps even a religious) significance.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, another key to the entire study is that the idea of communication is central to both the moral significance of art and the social function of education, and thus it inherently connects the aesthetic to teaching and learning.

By communicating human experience, the work of art reflects and recreates the ideas--and even ideals--of those who practice and perceive it. Art is a moral phenomenon in part because it signifies a method for the transmission and renewal of culture. The understanding and appreciation of art in culture (especially the art of a foreign culture) develops an attitude or disposition, an ethos, of tolerance and open mindedness. The meaning and sense of "beauty," for example, encompasses a wide spectrum of human standards and ideals. The work of art carries and creates value in a way that inevitably influences thought and behavior.

The ancient Greek poet-philosophers keenly understood the link between art and ethics, and how it affects the society as a whole. In our own democratic society, that link

and its consequences still exist. Consequently, if art functions today merely to convey autocratically fixed meanings ("moral" or otherwise), then the art is under an external control that can be used for purposes of propaganda or indoctrination. In terms of education, if we teach only the artistic meanings agreed upon by "experts," then the result can be an ignorance and prejudice that blocks critical and qualitative thinking. Perhaps this would indicate the truly "immoral" potential of art. For example, the pervasive use of aesthetic images in popular culture (for commercial and political ends as well as for entertainment) often appeal to sentiment and sensuality in a sensational way that appears to manipulate the tastes, buying habits, and even votes of Americans. The current controversy over art censorship (which was discussed in the third chapter) further reveals the ethical--and indeed unethical--potential inherent in the free expression as well as the social control of art. All of these factors suggest that the need for developing a genuine aesthetic literacy in schooling bears directly on the meaning and aims of a moral education.

In a democracy art carries a pedagogical and social function beyond merely "re-presenting" and, thus, conserving the status quo. Artistic expression and social value are born together; hence, the aesthetic can function to create new values and ideas. In fact, a striking characteristic of "modern art," whether in painting, music, dance, or whatever,

has been the way in which conventional standards of value, beauty, and even method of representation are challenged and transformed. From a pragmatic as well as democratic perspective, the moral meaning of art does not rest upon preordained and fixed standards but rather signifies the qualitative process through which experience itself is created and recreated, valued and evaluated.

The gist of all this is to point out that because art functions as the most vital and immediate vehicle for human expression, there is a dynamic connection between art as experience and culture as community; and this connection defines a moral function. It is significant that Dewey, while also seeking to develop the democratic aims of schooling, clarified both the function of art and the meaning of morality by indicating the social nature of their relationship. Ironically,

Were art an acknowledged power in human association . . . and were morals understood to be indetical with every aspect of value that is shared in experience, the "problem" of the relation of art and morals would not exist.<sup>14</sup>

The ethical and educational function of art lies in its inherent potential as an aesthetic experience, that is, as a unifying and integrative activity. By communicating human experience so vividly and intensely, the work of art creates a larger sense of our common humanity. Thus, art conveys values and ideas not only within a culture--serving potentially to unite the various ethnic groups within our own

"melting pot" society--but also across cultures in a way that expands our horizon to gain access to a broader range of human experience. When we consider this moral function of art in the context of the enormous political changes now taking place in Eastern Europe, it is no coincidence that a newspaper editor there writes that "artwork necessarily creates an atmosphere of international understanding [and] speaks with the same urgency to people throughout the world."<sup>15</sup>

By exposing us to the values and views of others, art can liberate us from the more narrow egocentric and ethnocentric patterns of viewing the world and so can create a larger sense of vision. The work of art unites us with the perspective of those outside ourselves. Surely this is a basic moral aim of a "liberal" education--one that frees the capacity for thought and action. In other words, the aesthetic appreciation of art outside our own usual custom, boundary, or taste has certain liberating and unifying consequences. Such an endeavor, therefore, is ethical and educational because it effects a disposition in attitude. And the very process of cultivating such an open, aesthetic disposition imitates the work of art itself as a moral and educational activity. As Dewey put it,

We become artists ourselves as we undertake this [social] integration and . . . our own experience is reoriented. Barriers are dissolved, limiting prejudices melt away . . . . [Moreover] this insensible melting is far more efficacious than the change effected by reasoning, because it enters directly into attitude. . . . A community and continuity that do not exist physically are created.<sup>16</sup>



The work of art potentially unifies not just a sense of community but the experience of the individual as well. The aesthetic activity of creating and appreciating art helps to liberate experience from the mundane mediocrity and mechanical alienation so prevalent in modern industrial culture.<sup>17</sup> The unifying power of art derives from the very nature of aesthetic experience as an activity that develops and exercises the whole person by integrating body and sense with thought and feeling and action. The aesthetic integrates human experience. Dewey remarked that the work of art embodies the integral, unified response of the entire organism.<sup>18</sup> The physical, emotional, intellectual, and even spiritual realms of the human psyche are all involved when the (art) experience is genuinely aesthetic.<sup>19</sup>

From a social as well as individual perspective, then, the work of art constitutes the work of moral action, just as the appropriate balance and harmony of everyday conduct constitutes the classical Greek attitude toward the aesthetic in daily life.<sup>20</sup> The ancient attitude that united the function of art with moral consequence also can serve to reconstruct modern society and schooling. Thus, calculus, cooking, carpentry, and even teaching itself can become art to the degree that each activity effects a transformation of thought, feeling, and action. Indeed, any experience can initiate the moral work of art. The "art of living" still signifies the pragmatic attitude whereby aesthetic meaning is

discovered within all activities; the "art of schooling" signifies a similar ideal.

In summary, the aim of clarifying the moral function of the aesthetic is to point to its social and educational implications. The general function of education is to transmit and renew culture. This is accomplished through a process of communication that, in a democracy, builds a social (and even global) sense of community. The work of art is defined by virtue of its function, namely, its heightened power of expression and communication. The act of communicating our common experience connects art to the practice of schooling, for schooling always implies a social method for teaching and learning, which obviously depends on effective communication. Moreover, schools themselves are microcosms of the larger social organism. Dewey suggested that schools are in fact "embryonic communities" where active aesthetic occupations such as cooking, gardening, and carpentry could serve as a means toward social, moral, and intellectual growth.<sup>21</sup> Consequently, the work of art not only can contribute to the social goals of democracy, but, as a form of communication, art has an enormous--even revolutionary--potential as a method of education! Dewey forcefully made this point and then criticized the narrow attitude that rejects such a notion when he stated that

It is by way of communication that art becomes the incomparable organ of instruction, but the way is so remote from that usually associated with the idea of education, it is a way that lifts art so far above what we are accustomed to think of as instruction, that we are repelled by any suggestion of teaching and learning in connection with art. But our revolt is in fact a reflection upon education that proceeds by methods so literal as to exclude the imagination and one not touching the desires and emotions of men.<sup>22</sup>

The Aesthetic and the Anaesthetic--  
A Moral Context for Schooling

Underlying Dewey's philosophy of education is the idea that information is vitalized to the extent that it is connected to life experience, which also signifies the present interests and needs of the learner. The idea was a revolt against a mechanical epistemology, a "cold-storage ideal of knowledge," that often degenerates into a rigid anaesthetic method of education.<sup>23</sup> From the beginning of his career, Dewey had questioned the value and consequence of the traditional scholastic method that focused on the accumulation of fact rather than the aesthetic impulses to act, feel, and create. The work of art can recover the moral quality of schooling as a vital and enlivening activity, yet the state of schooling today remains pretty much the same as Dewey described it almost a century ago:

It is our present education which is highly specialized, one sided, and narrow. It is an education dominated almost entirely by the medieval conception of learning. It is something which appeals for the most part simply to the intellectual aspect of our natures, our desire to learn, to accumulate information, and to get control of the symbols of learning; not to our impulses and tendencies to make, to do, to create, to produce, whether in the form of utility or of art.<sup>24</sup>

The fundamental problem of modern education, then, is reconstructing the dynamic aesthetic quality in which teaching and learning thrive, for when this quality is absent, schooling is no longer educative but is deadening and inert. Furthermore, developing the art of schooling awakens us to the aesthetic possibilities in other work and activities. In Democracy and Education, Dewey intimated the vast moral and social transformation that could take place if the vital aesthetic qualities of teaching and learning were cultivated. Hence,

Were all instructors to realize that the quality of mental process, not the production of correct answers, is the measure of educative growth something hardly less than a revolution in teaching would be worked.<sup>25</sup>

Unfortunately, schooling still seems to be a rather "business-like" production that stresses measurable results in the form of grades and testing.<sup>26</sup> Such an anaesthesia of quality is evidenced by the fact that many students today simply are not involved in or inspired by the learning process.<sup>27</sup> The larger social tragedy is that, conditioned by the classroom situation, all future work and discipline also become seen as a required chore devoid of vital aesthetic quality. In Experience and Education, Dewey poignantly pointed out that the qualitative context of schooling always carries a "collateral," and often hidden, curriculum that has pragmatic consequences for future life and learning:

Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formations of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes . . . are fundamentally what count in the future. The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning.<sup>28</sup>

The formation of enduring attitudes that are shaped by the present aesthetic--or, indeed, anaesthetic--quality of the learning environment greatly affects future work and conduct. Such dispositions in attitude again signify the moral consequences of attending to the aesthetic context of schooling (or, perhaps, the immoral consequences of not attending to it). The point is that an effective way to clarify what aesthetic education entails is to indicate what it does not entail. The meaning of the aesthetic is defined best not in contrast to rational or even practical activities but rather as opposed to activities that are "an-aesthetic." This puts aesthetic experience in an ethical context that allows for its full understanding and appreciation.<sup>29</sup> What, then, does the anaesthetic in experience and education signify? In Art as Experience, Dewey denoted the anaesthetic by stating that

The enemies of the aesthetic are neither the practical nor the intellectual. They are the humdrum; slackness of loose ends; submission to convention in practice and intellectual procedure. Rigid abstinence, coerced submission, tightness on one side and dissipation, incoherence, and aimless indulgence on the other, are deviations in opposite directions from the unity of an experience.<sup>30</sup>

It is highly significant that, in another context, Dewey also singled out these two opposites of the aesthetic,

namely, the extremes of routine and randomness, as the enemies of reflective thought and action!<sup>31</sup> In other words, the rigidity of routine habit on one side and capricious, aimless behavior on the other stifles intelligence and, hence, education as a whole. Whenever teaching and learning is criticized as an overly "academic" or "scholastic" activity (as it often is especially in higher education), it usually connotes the extreme of rote submission to convention. Education becomes anaesthetic, in part, to the extent that it is made into a mechanical routine. Thus, schooling loses its inherent inspiration and moral drive to the degree that it relies too heavily on textbook study or unimaginative testing of mere technical skill. In addition, the idea that the rigidity of routine is antithetical both to aesthetic quality and to intellectual growth provides yet another logical connection between art and education!

On the other side, and just as important, is the idea that immediate and sensory activities in themselves are not sufficient to completely develop the aesthetic in education. As Dewey pointed out, there is a problem with educators who, after recognizing the mechanical and conforming quality of traditional schooling, then assume that any type of active "play" or creative "expression" by itself will constitute effective teaching and learning.<sup>32</sup> When such activities are employed without some sense of structure and direction, they remain literally "aim-less" and, hence, anaesthetic. In fact,

Dewey explicitly described the anaesthetic in experience as also including activities that, although immediate and sensory, remain simply pleasing diversions without an orderly, cumulative method and outcome.

One thing replaces another, but does not absorb it and carry it on. There is experience, but so slack and discursive that it is not an experience. Needless to say, such experiences are anaesthetic.<sup>33</sup>

The practical point is that whether we choose or not to develop the aesthetic in schooling, there always will be an immediately felt, qualitative context of education that influences both the present learning situation as well as the future disposition toward all learning. Good teachers naturally promote the art of schooling through their own enthusiasm for teaching as learning; others, unfortunately, seem to inculcate a dulling of attitude toward not only their particular subjects, but toward school in general. Moreover, students of all ages can discern the difference between a teacher who elicits an inspiring and imaginative attitude in the classroom and one who does not. In How We Think, Dewey indicated the vital importance of this "whole-hearted" enthusiasm for educational inquiry, because without the aesthetic quality of immediate satisfaction and worth, interest becomes divided and reason is impeded. Hence,

When a person is absorbed, the subject carries him on . . . . instead of having to use his energy to hold his mind to the subject . . . the material holds and buoys his mind up and gives an onward impetus to thinking. A genuine enthusiasm is an attitude that operates as an intellectual force. A teacher who arouses such an enthusiasm in his pupils has done something that no amount of formalized method, no matter how correct, can accomplish.<sup>34</sup>

To sum up, the qualitative and immediately felt environment of teaching and learning can vitalize education when it is aesthetic or numb it when it is not. Therefore, apart from subject matter, the aesthetic in education also signifies the context of teaching and learning as a whole. It is the method of instruction that best can unify the overall quality of the learning experience. Moreover, the vital characteristic of every aesthetic activity is an immediately felt apprehension that binds together the development of the whole experience. By signifying this binding qualitative context, the aesthetic embodies the emotional, and hence the motivational, aspect of education, which either can impel or repel the entire learning process. Finally, the immediate aesthetic quality greatly affects both the present experience as well as the future habit and attitude toward all learning. Dewey implicated the vital and distinctly pragmatic function of the qualitative context of schooling when he wrote that

Everything depends upon the quality of the experience which is had. The quality of any experience has two aspects. There is an immediate aspect of agreeableness or disagreeableness, and there is its influence upon later experiences.<sup>35</sup>



Aesthetic Experience in Education--  
Pragmatic Form and Function

The aesthetic frequently is defined as an experience intrinsically satisfying or worthwhile in its own immediacy. Dewey expressed this aesthetic aspect and its necessity for schooling when he wrote, "That education is literally and all the time its own reward means that no alleged study or discipline is educative unless it is worthwhile in its own immediate having."<sup>36</sup> Education, like art, becomes aesthetic to the degree that it enters and vitalizes the present experience, here and now.<sup>37</sup> However, if the characteristic of immediacy alone is used to construct aesthetic meaning and value, then problems arise for developing the pragmatic function of the work of art.

One problem, also discussed in the third chapter, is that the common tendency to define art as an inherent end in itself ("art for art's sake") seems to divorce the aesthetic from being a practical or useful activity--that is, aiming at goals beyond its own immediacy. Moreover, the notion that the aesthetic is defined through its "intrinsic" worth often is interpreted as yet another dualism, separating inherent value from practical use. Consequently, art and aesthetic experience in schools generally are justified solely on the grounds of their inherent value, rather than also as a pragmatic means to the social, technical, and intellectual aims of education. The dualism assumes a mechanical

separation that divorces means from ends. Dewey addressed the problem by clarifying the relation of means to ends and also by demonstrating that the aesthetic not only carries intrinsic worth but also has a useful function.

For Dewey, activities are never "ends-in-themselves," that is, fixed and isolated and lying outside the method of their realization or their consequences in action; hence, the meaning of "art for art's sake" appears nonsensical. In an essay on "The Nature of Aims," Dewey defined aims as "ends-in-view" that function to guide activity in a particular direction, like the archer's target that guides the active process of aiming the arrow.<sup>38</sup> From this viewpoint, all human ends are literally "end-less," directing activity within experience so that each aim signifies a new beginning for the development of future aims. Moreover, every end functions to refine and develop the very means used to reach it. Indeed, an end is only what it is because of the development of concrete means--a method--for its realization; such unity between means and ends is at the core of the pragmatic attitude.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, concerning the nature of educational values, Dewey clarified the pedagogical connection between "intrinsic" and "instrumental" worth, thereby resolving the traditional problem of separating aesthetic activities from those of more practical application.<sup>40</sup> Instrumental values are applied particularly to activities having a definite

purpose or practical aim, such as in labor, work, or science. Intrinsic values, on the other hand, refer to the immediate sense of realization or appreciation that makes an activity of leisure, play, or art a complete and worthwhile experience in itself. But the main point for Dewey was that these two types of value reflect degrees of emphasis, not a division or rigid dualism. Thus, aesthetic experience carries a certain instrumental potential, while, on the other side, every practical or utilitarian activity is more fully instrumental to the degree that it also is appreciated for its own intrinsic value!<sup>41</sup> The apparent dualism between instrumental and intrinsic value vanishes as the idea of "art for art's sake" is replaced with an attention to the aesthetic as a pragmatic social resource, and the potential for art is discovered within all forms of work.

The point is that the "purpose" of art is to guide experience not merely for its own sake (as an end in itself) but also beyond itself by aiming, first, at the refinement and appreciation of future aesthetic experiences. In other words, the larger aim of art is to increase the aesthetic potential in all our lived activities, thereby expanding and enriching the world of human action. The work of art then can be used as a practical means for other, more specific, human ends. Precisely because of its vital inherent worth, aesthetic experience carries enormous potential as a useful pragmatic method aimed toward the physical, emotional, and intellectual

goals of education. Cultivating the aesthetic is instrumental for schooling because it influences thought, feeling, and action. And the practical aims of art bear a moral function as well, for morals carry little meaning unless put into practice. In an essay on "Experience, Nature, and Art," Dewey summed it up by stating that

Fine art consciously undertaken as such is peculiarly instrumental in quality. It is a device in experimentation carried on for the sake of education. It exists for a specialized use, use being a new training of modes of perception.<sup>42</sup>

From this organic perspective, there is no hard and fast separation between practical and inherent value; on the contrary, each contributes to the meaning and worth of the other. Thus, every practical occupation carries greater instrumental value to the degree that it also is a vitally worthwhile and enjoyable activity for its own sake--that is, to the degree that it is an aesthetic activity! In a reciprocal manner, the immediate worth of every aesthetic experience carries a more complete purpose and value to the degree that it points or leads to something beyond itself. This also means that aesthetic value is not restricted peculiarly to the enjoyment and production of fine art; rather, such inherent worth can and must be cultivated in all our daily activities. If not, then the work we do for a living as well as the preparatory school work of education can become a demoralizing experience--an "alienated labor"--that carries adverse consequences for society.<sup>43</sup>

The significant point for education and culture is that the experience of art, more than anything else, teaches an appreciation and discovery of aesthetic value within all other activities. Developing an aesthetic disposition, then, should be one of the basic functions of education. In fact, the formation of such moral dispositions, which have emotional and intellectual qualities, is at the core of education and even philosophy.<sup>44</sup> Simply put, the work of art is useful pedagogically because it cultivates the disposition of vital appreciation. Because the process of education aims ultimately to cultivate such attitudes in thought and conduct, the arts bear a practical, and even an indispensable, function within the school curriculum as

the chief agencies of an intensified, enhanced appreciation. As such, they are not only intrinsically and directly enjoyable, but they serve a purpose beyond themselves. They have the office, in increased degree, of all appreciation in fixing taste, in forming standards for the worth of later experiences. . . . They select and focus the elements of enjoyable worth which makes any experience directly enjoyable. They are not luxuries of education, but emphatic expressions of that which makes any education worth while.<sup>45</sup>

As a moral agent, art is form and forming; hence, the work of art also informs. It is highly significant that the aesthetic can function pragmatically as a method of philosophy as well as education. A philosophic disposition even depends on a uniquely aesthetic attitude, for, as Dewey remarked, "any person who is open minded and sensitive to new perceptions and who has concentration and responsibility in connecting them has . . . a philosophic disposition."<sup>46</sup> The work of art

opens the doors of perception that can lead to intellectual and moral development.<sup>47</sup> The practice of the aesthetic embodies the full scope and value of clear and vital perception. In sum, art aims at attitude and action.

For any experience to fulfill its purpose, it must be intelligently directed and guided, which then implies a certain order or structure for the aesthetic in schooling. Because the aesthetic carries consequences, it can entail a coherent method that leads to such consequences, and this, again, indicates a pragmatic concern. A consequence signifies an aim, a direction, that serves to shape the appropriate method used to reach it. Ends cannot be separated from the means used to realize them, for the relationship is reciprocal. The goal guides the method just as the method modifies the outcome, like a river bank that both forms and is formed by the course of the flowing water. The point is that aesthetic, intellectual, and moral potential is latent in every experience, depending only on the way in which such experiences are directed and realized. In Experience and Education, Dewey even defined education itself as "the intelligently directed development of the possibilities inherent in ordinary experience."<sup>48</sup> Pragmatism develops the intelligent construction of experience, and this sense of structure again links the work of art to the process of education.

A sense of cumulative progression, which means an ordered and orderly method, is a fundamental feature of both reflective thinking and aesthetic experience. The work of art, like intellectual activity, always signifies a certain coherent structure and aim. Thus, in How We Think, Dewey described reflective inquiry as a cumulative process whereby each step leads into the next by building upon what preceded it:

Reflection involves not simply a sequence of ideas, but a consequence: a consecutive ordering in such a way that each determines the next as its proper outcome, while each outcome in turn leans back on, or refers to, its predecessors.<sup>49</sup>

Every meaningful aesthetic experience also embodies a cumulative process with each step both absorbing what precedes it and preparing what is to come next. It is no coincidence, then, that in Art as Experience, Dewey pointed out that the work of art signifies a similarly structured, intelligently directed activity:

It is a developing process. The artist finds where he is going because of what he has previously done. . . . That state of the matter he has arrived at sets up demands to be fulfilled and it institutes a framework that limits further operations.<sup>50</sup>

The connection to quarry is that intellectual and aesthetic experiences are alike in that both mine the pragmatic meaning of method and consequence. A guiding aim or outcome gives shape and form to the means used to reach it. The common mistake of identifying the aim of art as an end in itself is made because the method of artwork and its

consequence are so intimately bound together; hence, both are referred to as "the work" of art. There is a continuous qualitative perception that occurs in the making as well as in the perceiving of artwork. Aesthetic activity is unique because the guiding aim that directs the actual work of art is itself qualitative, residing inherently in the process rather than only culminating in some external product or end result.<sup>51</sup> In fact, an experience becomes uniquely one of art to the degree that it is controlled through and directed by this immediate qualitative aesthetic perception.<sup>52</sup>

The point to make is that art, like inquiry, has its own goal that guides its method and determines its direction. The work of art certainly has a different type of aim than does a scientific formula, but the focus of the aim is not the issue from a pragmatic point of view, which looks instead to whether the experience is characterized by a cumulative movement toward a fulfilling consummation. The consequence directs the sequential development of the whole experience, whether the aim is a conceptual solution, as in scientific inquiry, or a more qualitative relation, such as is found in artistic expression. Moreover, it is precisely "the foresight of [such] consequences [that] involves the operation of intelligence."<sup>53</sup> Intelligent action depends on the formation of aims and the means used to achieve them.

Another pragmatic focus is the way in which some sense of resistance or felt problem can transform original impulses



into a complete and meaningful experience; otherwise, experience can remain random and formless, without an expressed sequence--and, thus, consequence--in action. Dewey noted that "every vital activity of any depth and range inevitably meets obstacles in the course of its effort to realize itself."<sup>54</sup> In order for reflective thinking to occur, there must be some felt resistance or problematic tension that transforms spontaneous impulse into intelligent action.

Demand for the solution of a perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection. Where there is no question of a problem to be solved or a difficulty to be surmounted, the course of suggestions flows on at random.<sup>55</sup>

Overcoming this hurdle gives shape to the means of action and meaning to the consequences of such action. The point is that this organic resistance leads to a subsequent transformation, a coherent expression, which prevents the amorphous lack of form that can render experience aimless and anaesthetic. Thus, in the work of art, too,

That which distinguishes an experience as aesthetic is conversion of resistance and tensions, of excitations that in themselves are temptations to diversion, into a movement toward an inclusive and fulfilling close.<sup>56</sup>

The pragmatic structure inherent in the form of art carries implications, then, for developing the aesthetic in education. On one side, the enemy of the aesthetic--the anaesthetic--signifies a learning experience so rigidly structured and product oriented as to suppress the intrinsic value within the process of learning itself. But at the other

extreme, equally anaesthetic, are activities that, although immediate and concrete, are so "formless" as to become literally aimless and, hence, without meaning, method, or consequence. It is fatal to an aim, said Dewey, "to permit capricious or discontinuous action in the name of spontaneous self-expression."<sup>57</sup> Thus, it is a grave error to employ sensory (or even "creative") activities in the name of aesthetic education without some sense of purpose.

Although the teachers of aesthetic education must, of course, value aesthetic activities and not use them mechanically through an excessive emphasis on technique or outcome, neither must they jump to the other extreme and subscribe to an aimless agenda of "free play," that is, a random spontaneity without goals or intelligent guidance. From a pragmatic perspective, everything depends on the way in which such activities are used.<sup>58</sup> Just as any experience has aesthetic potential, depending on how it is developed, Dewey's ideas can reform education by showing that any subject matter of experience has intellectual potential to the degree that it is used appropriately.

Any subject, from Greek to cooking, and from drawing to mathematics, is intellectual, if intellectual at all, not in its fixed inner structure, but in its function--in its power to start and direct significant inquiry and reflection.<sup>59</sup>

Likewise, any experience can become aesthetic not because of some fixed inner structure but because of its function. There is a great deal of difference, then, between

an experience that functions aesthetically, as a complete act, and one that is characterized by mere sense alone or an immediate discharge of emotion.<sup>60</sup> Sometimes "aesthetic" activities are used in schooling as isolated exercises (ends in themselves), as if they magically lead to educational consequences. Programs of alternative education often are criticized (perhaps unfairly) on these grounds.<sup>61</sup> But if sensory activities merely engage the student in the immediacy of experience, without an actual purpose or problem to be solved, then such activities will remain incomplete and, ironically, anaesthetic! Proposals for aesthetic education that focus solely on immediate sense awareness, while eschewing an intellectual awareness of method, outcome, and even reflection, can fall into the same dangerous trap.<sup>62</sup> What Dewey said of formal sense training and nature study or "observation" as an educational method can be applied to any form of aesthetic education in general:

What often makes . . . [it] intellectually ineffectual is that it is carried on without a sense of a problem that it helps define and solve. The evil of this isolation is seen throughout the entire educational system, from the kindergarten through the elementary and high schools to the college. . . . intellectual method is violated because [aesthetic] observations are not aroused and guided by an idea of the purpose they are to serve.<sup>63</sup>

To be pedagogically effective, aesthetic activity must carry a coherent, cumulative structure with a definite aim. It is not enough just to exhibit spontaneity, free expression, or the immediate interaction with sensuous materials. A curriculum filled with "creative" activities may overcome the

anaesthetic extreme of traditional rote learning, but it remains incomplete if it lacks a cohesive method and goal. Such a curriculum can, indeed, be reduced narrowly to an end in itself and then justified solely for its own sake. Ironically, such programs then can become dogmatic, reduced to technical exercises that tend toward the other extreme of routine repetition.

A pragmatic aesthetic education that uses art and aesthetic experience eschews random and undirected activities in favor of those that have a definite goal arising from some problematic situation. When directed by this sense of consequence, a purpose beyond itself, aesthetic education becomes an instrument for intellectual growth and thus avoids much of the criticism levelled against "holistic" or "alternative" learning. A practical pedagogical aesthetic is conducted according to specific methods and aims. When used to stimulate inquiry, such aesthetic activities function as a potent means toward the larger social, intellectual, and moral aims of education.

In conclusion, the pragmatic use of aesthetic experience in education becomes sterilized unless it provokes reflective inquiry and operates as an intellectual instrument rather than merely as a pleasing amusement. This applies both to productive aesthetic activities as well as those with a more sensory or appreciative focus. "What does having an experience amount to," asked Dewey, "unless, as it ceases to

exist, it leaves behind an increment of meaning, a better understanding of something, a clearer future plan and purpose of action: in short an idea?"<sup>64</sup> This is especially important to remember whenever experiential methods are developed for education. As we shall see in the next chapter, aesthetic education naturally begins with the experience and subject matter of the arts, but it does not stop there; it also must include a method that intelligently guides the conditions under which art, and all the other subjects, are taught.

#### Notes:

1. John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934), p. 48, "Art, in its form, unites the very same relation of doing and undergoing, outgoing and incoming energy, that makes an experience to be an experience."
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 44: "An experience has pattern and structure because it is not just doing and undergoing in alternation, but consists of them in relationship. . . . This relationship is what gives meaning; to grasp it is the objective of all intelligence."
3. Ibid., pp. 48, 54 (emphases mine).
4. See Frank Barron, "The Psychology of Imagination," Scientific American, vol. 199 (1958), 150-166, for the relationship of creativity to perceptual fluency, independence of judgment, and tolerance for complexity and uncertainty.
5. Friedrich Nietzsche, Twilight of the Idols (1889), trans. by R.J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1968), pp. 63-66.
6. See Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 214: "The product of art--temple, painting, statue, poem--is not the work of art. The work takes place when a human being cooperates with the product so that the outcome is an experience that is enjoyed because of its liberating and ordered properties."

7. G.W.F. Hegel, On Art, Religion, Philosophy (1831), ed. by J. Gray, trans. by B. Bosanquet (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), pp. 22-127. Hegel's organic method of process and context was an early and lasting influence on Dewey's own thought, even though Dewey was later to abandon Hegel's metaphysical perspective. For Hegel's influence on Dewey, see George Dykhuizen, The Life and Mind of John Dewey (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973), pp. 38-39.
8. Hegel, On Art, Religion, Philosophy, p. 29.
9. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 327.
10. Ibid., p. 344: "As long as art is the beauty parlor of civilization, neither art nor civilization is secure . . . . The moral office and human function of art can be intelligently discussed only within the context of culture."
11. Ibid., p. 286.
12. John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916), pp. 4-6.
13. See John Dewey, A Common Faith (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1934).
14. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 348.
15. Unidentified author, quoted in "Guggenheim Art Show Draws Crowds in Prague," The New York Times, 3 January 1989, 20C.
16. Dewey, Art as Experience, pp. 334, 336.
17. Nietzsche was perhaps the first modern philosopher to sound the existential theme that the work of art can overcome the numbing, mechanical influences of society. See Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy (1872), trans. by W. Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967).
18. Dewey, Art as Experience, pp. 50, 122: "Hand and eye, when the experience is aesthetic, are but instruments through which the entire live creature, moved and active throughout, operates . . . . It is not just the visual apparatus but the whole organism that interacts with the environment in all but routine action. The eye, ear, or whatever, is only the channel through which the total response takes place."

19. For two perspectives on the spiritual nature of art, see W. Kandinsky, Concerning the Spiritual in Art (1914), trans. by M. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications, 1977); and Hazrat Inayat Khan, The Music of Life (Santa Fe, NM: Omega Press, 1983).
20. Cf. Dewey, Art as Experience, p.39: "The Greek identification of good conduct with conduct having proportion, grace, and harmony, the kalon-agathon, is a more obvious example of distinctive aesthetic quality in moral action."
21. John Dewey, The School and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1899). In this seminal work, Dewey first outlined the "new education" with its focus on the experience and interest of the child. At the same time, Dewey also was involved with the Chicago Laboratory School where his ideas were being tested in practice.
22. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 347.
23. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 158: "Frequently [knowledge] is treated as an end itself, and then the goal becomes to heap it up and display it when called for. This static, cold-storage ideal of knowledge is inimical to educative development."
24. John Dewey, "The School and Society" (1899), in John Dewey on Education, ed. by R.D. Archambault (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 308.
25. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 176.
26. See Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, & Co., 1978; orig. pub. 1935), pp. 230, 487-489, for the influence of "business efficiency" on the objectives and techniques of American education, and even the early use of school testing for industrial purposes.
27. Recent studies reveal that half of all eighth-graders say that they are bored in school. Cited in James Kilpatrick, "Bush's Program for Education is Worthy," The Florida Times Union, 14 February 1991, 11A.
28. John Dewey, Experience and Education (New York: Collier Books, 1938), p. 48.
29. See Albert Tsugawa, "The Nature of the Aesthetic and Human Values," Art Education, vol. 21 (Nov. 1968), 11-20; and Merle Flannery, "Aesthetic Education," Art Education, vol. 26, no. 5 (May 1973), 10-14.

30. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 40.
31. Cf. Dewey, Democracy and Education, pp. 49, 146, "Habits reduce themselves to routine ways of acting . . . just in the degree in which intelligence is disconnected from them. Routine habits are unthinking habits. . . . The opposites to thoughtful action are routine and capricious behavior."
32. John Dewey, How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1933), pp. 51-52. It is ironic, then, that critics of such unstructured "open" curriculums still blame Dewey as its source, when the fact is that Dewey himself criticized any activity without discipline, direction, and purpose.
33. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 40.
34. Dewey, How We Think, pp. 31-32. Psychologically, this aesthetic attitude of whole-hearted enthusiasm has been described as an "intrinsic reinforcer," signifying the natural motivation that children bring to learning but which often is stifled in schooling through the common practice of external rewards. See R. DeCharms, "From Pawns to Origins: Toward Self-Motivation," in Psychology and Educational Practice, ed. by G. Lesser (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, & Co., 1971), 380-407.
35. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 27.
36. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 109.
37. See Dewey, Art as Experience, pp. 122-123: "The scope of a work of art is measured by the number and variety of elements . . . that are organically absorbed into the perception had here and now."
38. John Dewey, "The Nature of Aims" (1922), in John Dewey on Education, ed. by R.D. Archambault (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 70-80.
39. Pragmatism emphasizes the way in which prospective human goals can reflect back to shape and refine the best method used to reach them. However, it is a gross distortion, and one commonly made, to define pragmatism as a philosophy of "the ends justifying the means." It is only a vulgar pragmatism that fails to consider how the type of method used to reach any goal will shape the moral nature of that goal as well as that of future methods and aims.



40. Dewey, "Educational Values," chap. in Democracy and Education, pp. 231-249.
41. Cf. Ibid., p. 243: "An instrumental value has the intrinsic value of being a means to an end."
42. John Dewey, "Experience, Nature, and Art" (1925), in John Dewey on Education, p. 164 (emphasis mine).
43. See Karl Marx, Early Writings (1844), trans. by T.B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963), pp. 120-134. In these early writings, Marx implied a moral meaning of the aesthetic in his discussion of "alienated labor." He argued that in Western society, labor or the performance of work has become an activity of alienation and devaluation in which the worker becomes alienated from--and, thus, anaesthetized to--both the product and process of his work, as well as from himself and other workers. In his critique of industrial society, Marx foresaw the necessity of imbuing productive activity (which also must include schoolwork) with an aesthetic vitality that makes labor both a vital means to an end and a satisfying activity for its own sake.
44. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 328: "If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men, philosophy may even be defined as the general theory of education."
45. Ibid., p. 238.
46. Ibid., p. 325 (emphasis mine).
47. See E. Simpson, "A Holistic Approach to Moral Development," in Moral Development and Behavior, ed. by T. Lickona (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1976), pp. 159-170, for a discussion of the ways in which aesthetic qualities such as creative imagination, emotion, and intuition influence moral development.
48. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 89.
49. Dewey, How We Think, p. 4.
50. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 111.
51. See Ibid., p. 56: "[In art] fulfilling, consummating, are continuous functions, not mere ends located at one place only. An engraver, painter, or writer is in process of completing at every stage of his work."

52. Ibid., p. 50: "In as far as the development of an experience is controlled through reference to these immediately felt relations of order and fulfillment, that experience becomes dominantly aesthetic in nature."
53. Dewey, Experience and Education, p. 68.
54. Dewey, How We Think, p. 87.
55. Ibid., p. 14.
56. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 56. Interestingly enough, the same principle of resistance has been applied specifically to a theory of music, suggesting that aesthetic value is increased to the degree that a musical theme resists and, then, transforms an original impulse. See L. Meyer, Emotion and Meaning in Music (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956).
57. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 102.
58. Ibid., p. 196: "It is not enough just to introduce plays and games, hand work and manual exercises. Everything depends upon the way in which they are employed."
59. Dewey, How We Think, pp. 46-47.
60. Cf. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 62: "To discharge is to get rid of, to dismiss; to express is to stay by, to carry forward in development, to work out to completion."
61. The Montessori Method is an example. J. Hunt, in his introduction to Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), pp. xviii-xix, argues that, in contrast to Dewey, "Montessori provides a mechanically simple set of devices . . . . [which] hold to an untenable theory as to the value of formal and systematic sense training." However, J. McDermott, in his introduction to Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), pp. xiii-xv and xxiii, suggests that Montessori's functional empirical method, scientific data, and human aspirations share--with Dewey--a pragmatic approach that unites theory to practice!
62. See, for example, Wellington Madenfort, "Aesthetic Education: An Education for the Immediacy of Sensuous Experience," Art Education, vol. 25, no. 5 (May 1972), 10-14.
63. Dewey, How We Think, pp. 250-251.

64. Ibid., p. 154.

CHAPTER 7  
THE FUNCTION OF THE ARTS IN EDUCATION:  
CULTIVATING AESTHETIC LITERACY

Education in music and the arts is most potent because by their rhythm and harmony they sink deeply into the soul and fasten firmly upon it, bringing grace and beauty if the education is good.

Plato

Integrating the aesthetic into schooling naturally begins with the art education curriculum, for aesthetic experience is concentrated and illuminated best through art. The work of creating, studying, and appreciating the various forms of art is the basic foundation for cultivating the wider art of schooling. These aesthetic "basics" include all the arts. Yet one problem with art education today is the way in which it, like other studies, has become overly specialized, so that instruction is divided and isolated from the rest of the curriculum. Moreover, contemporary observers of art education remark that it still remains a "nicety, not a necessity," and that, paradoxically, it often serves to suffocate rather than inspire creativity.<sup>1</sup>

An interdisciplinary art education that integrates the diversity of creative art forms through intelligent understanding and vital appreciation is, therefore, the proper source for both art in education and education through art.

As has been demonstrated throughout this study, such an aesthetic foundation was laid long ago by the ancient Greeks. Consequently, we can build on this foundation in order to reconstruct the edifice of aesthetic education today.

### Aesthetic Education in the Ancient World

In Western culture, the history of using art as a formal subject and method of schooling can be traced back to classical Greece. Plato specifically is cited as the originator of aesthetic education, even by those who disagree over the method and aim of such an education.<sup>2</sup> As shown earlier, the vital aesthetic quality that permeated the context of ancient culture united the method of art (techne) to science, and it also informed a social attitude (the kalos/agathos) that cultivated the distinctly moral meaning of aesthetic experience. Poetry and philosophy were born together as intellectual form and content. Indeed, the word "poetry" itself (from poesis, "to make") originally signified more than just a literary text, as it commonly does today. Poetry properly embraced also the aural arts of music and song as well as rhetoric and oratory that pervaded the political assemblies, law courts, and dramatic festivals so characteristic of classical Greek society.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, it is significant that the epic poets actually were considered the first educators of Greece.<sup>4</sup> The point is to reveal the practical integration of "poetry," as a vital aesthetic quality, within the social context of ancient culture.

The great historical irony is that the theory that emerged from such an ubiquitous social practice of art has evolved into an isolation and specialization of the aesthetic in culture today. Consequently, it may seem strange that the same poet-philosopher who is credited with founding the idea of aesthetic education actually criticized the educational value of the poets of his own day. Plato's concern over the immoral and miseducative uses of art already has been discussed in the third chapter, and his regulation of the poets and musicians in the Republic may seem not unlike the artistic control exercised in modern totalitarian states.<sup>5</sup> Plato's philosophy, then, may even represent the antithesis of a genuinely democratic method for developing the aesthetic in education.<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, one writer, citing Plato as support, has criticized an "unbridled democritization of the aesthetic" as being inadequate to art as well as to education.<sup>7</sup> Certainly, a diffusion or dilution of the aesthetic is inadequate, for art then becomes artificial. However, a society such as our own properly builds an aesthetic education (or any conception of schooling for that matter) upon basic democratic principles such as open access, individual expression, and academic freedom. The fact that certain works of literature still are censored from American schools thus implies a social and even political challenge for developing aesthetic education!<sup>8</sup>

Plato's philosophy is valuable because it points to the moral and social consequences that can occur when art degenerates into a sensuous and sensual amusement that appeals to blind instinct or sentiment alone. The same idea is echoed today in the voice of those critics, and parents, who accuse the media, movies, MTV, and music in popular culture for the tendency to sensationalize fame, sex, and violence in a way that can exploit and corrupt youth. Consequently, finding the proper balance between the two extremes, that is, a rigid control of the arts on one side and a sensational corruption of the aesthetic on the other, remains a challenge for the use of art in current culture.

By banishing the poets (or, at least, certain types of poets), Plato was not dismissing the aesthetic within schooling; rather, he was well aware of the vital significance of aesthetic experience and was concerned with the way in which it can be misused. His famous statement that "rhythm and harmony sink most deeply into the soul" acknowledges the immense social as well as educational influence that the aesthetic inherently carries.<sup>9</sup> Art was integrated organically into the whole fabric of Greek society. Thus, although Plato focused on the miseducative potential of art, underlying his philosophy was the idea that the aesthetic--when used correctly--can become a potent means for the transmission of knowledge. In other words, art can complement and lead to philosophia, the love of wisdom.<sup>10</sup> This idea was developed

further by the Neoplatonists, especially those of the Renaissance who integrated artistic form with mathematical and religious content.<sup>11</sup> It is probably no coincidence that Plato ended so many of his dialogues (and significantly the Republic) with a myth, that is, a uniquely artistic image and poetic parable. Also, it is a revealing reflection that these dramatic "dialogues" can be considered classic works of literature as well as philosophy!

Plato's work is further of value for this study because it cultivates the connection between philosophy, schooling, and art. In developing the function of schooling for society, Plato (like Dewey later) had constructed a systematic inquiry into education based on certain social aims.<sup>12</sup> Plato's own school of philosophy (the Academia) advanced the Pythagorean tradition of a formal education in the realm of the Muses (mousice), which included a range of creative arts from music, dance, and poetry to history, mathematics, and astronomy.<sup>13</sup> It is noteworthy that the ancient "schools" of philosophy did not signify mere abstract theoretical systems, as they often do today, but were actual communities for living and learning that cultivated diet, exercise, and even spiritual practice as well as disciplined academic study.<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, the Platonic theory of elementary and secondary schooling also represented a holistic integration of physical, artistic, and intellectual development. It was



built on the twin pillars of gymnastice, which included diet and hygiene as well as sport and calisthenics for the health of the body, and mousice, which aimed the "musical" as well as literary and mathematical arts toward the cultivation of intelligence.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, the two are interdependent. The Greek "gymnastic" training promoted health and exercise not merely for its own sake but also as a form of physical (and mental) discipline that can complement the more academic studies. Plato envisioned a pedagogical integration of mind and body, leading to the moral formation of character upon which the education of the philosopher then could be based. This moral and artistic principle of integration, along with the implied pedagogical use of certain art forms, reveals the full meaning of Plato's aesthetic education. For Plato, aesthetic education was inseparable from moral education. The classic Greek association of beauty with virtuous action reminds us that the work of art still can contribute to the moral aims of education. As Plato put it,

Anyone who can produce the perfect blend of the physical and intellectual sides of education and apply them to the training of character, is also producing music and harmony of far more importance than any mere musician tuning strings.<sup>16</sup>

The next stage in Plato's curriculum (which also foreshadowed our own concept of "higher" education) entailed the theoretical study of the five mathematical sciences--arithmetic, plane and solid geometry, astronomy, and music--as well as the art of "dialectic" or pure reasoning.<sup>17</sup>

Mathematics, for the Greeks, connected the transcendent world of eternal forms with the natural world of phenomena. Thus, the mathematical sciences functioned as a unifying, even mystical, bridge between the natural and supernatural realms. The point is that mathematics revealed the qualitative and aesthetic relations inherent in musical modes, celestial motion, visual forms, and even simple numbers.<sup>18</sup> The vital link between music and mathematics in Plato's philosophy, which originated in the Pythagorean tradition, illuminates the dynamic integration of aesthetic and intellectual meanings.<sup>19</sup> It is this connection that needs to be reawakened today.

The context of ancient Greek education as a whole also provides an inspiration for present schooling to integrate aesthetic and intellectual methods as well as practical and liberal aims. The classical ideal of paideia (our word "pedagogy" is derived from its root) signified the development of the whole person in body and mind, sense and reason, character and intellect.<sup>20</sup> The culture too aimed at this integration, as the science of philosophy was expressed through aesthetic forms that uncovered the qualitative content of mathematics as well as music, while the literary arts of rhetoric and oratory had a practical use in a society that centered around drama, debate, and dialogue. The point is that the two chief pedagogical traditions in the ancient world, philosophy and rhetoric, represented the search for wholeness.

The orator and the philosopher could not do without each other; neither could give up what was really the other's aim and object. The Greek wanted to be both artist and sage.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, while Plato's school aimed to produce philosophers who could lead the state, his contemporary rival Isocrates, who was heir to the Sophist school of rhetoric, also aimed to cultivate the content of character along with the art of clear expression. For the ancient Greeks, the art of language was connected to the philosophic search for wisdom because learning to speak and write properly was associated with learning to think and even live properly.<sup>22</sup> The creative dialectic between rhetoric and philosophy in the ancient world was the seed out of which Western education was to flower. The seven liberal arts of the medieval universities combined the (Sophist) "trivium" of logic, grammar, and rhetoric with the (Platonic) "quadrivium" of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.<sup>23</sup> In a real sense, the Sophists had initiated the literary and "scholastic" tradition of studying written texts, the method of book learning, while the philosophers had initiated the "scientific" investigation of man and nature. But the two streams emerged from the same source and led to the same integral whole: the language arts could be a means to knowledge and ethics, just as the science of philosophy both expressed and discovered the aesthetic quality of art.

However, the two traditions also produced a distinction that, over time, has evolved into rival

conceptions over the methods and aims of schooling. The Sophists, who first developed education as a profession, revolutionized the form and content of Greek schooling by providing a practical and even "vocational" training in law or politics. Rhetoric was a useful tool for winning legal and political debates. On the other hand, the schools of philosophy (especially Plato's) represented a "liberal" education that aimed to liberate the self and the society through moral development and academic discipline. It is ironic that a liberal arts education today often develops language and literature in a way that appears divorced from its "real life" application, while philosophy has been reduced to an academic specialization that often restricts itself to a technical linguistic analysis. Also, the apparent rivalry between an aesthetic training in eloquent speech and an academic training in philosophy can split into a dualism between the "art" of language and the "science" of philosophy. Thus, even though Plato can be cited as the founder of "aesthetic" education, he also has been cited as the proponent of a "scientific" pedagogy in a way that seems to adversely separate science from art.

By his vigorous contrast between philosophy and poetry and by breaking with the settled tradition that Homer was the basis of all education, Plato put the Greek soul in a dilemma: should education remain fundamentally artistic and poetical, or become scientific? Every educator since has had to face this problem, and it has never received any final solution, our own education still being divided between the opposing claims of science and the arts.<sup>24</sup>

Integrating Discipline and Creativity Through The Arts

The fact that some see Plato as fostering art in education and others see him as fostering science is no paradox; it simply reveals Plato's genuinely holistic approach, which often is (mis)interpreted toward one side or the other of a forced dualism. But the purpose of reviewing the practice of schooling in ancient Greece is not to call for a nostalgic return to the past, for society today has its own unique context and consequences that education must reflect. Rather, the aim is to use the example of the past as a means to reconstruct an art education curriculum that addresses the issues and needs of our own day. If art is to be an aesthetically unifying activity, then art education has the responsibility of valuing, using, and unifying all creative forms of human expression.

One important implication for schooling today is the way in which "physical" education carried a vital aesthetic as well as moral function in the ancient world. Athletics was characteristic of the Greek holistic attitude; sport was invested with medical, ethical, and artistic value. In his ideal republic, Plato thus developed an aesthetic education of the body to promote the health of the individual (and the society) through a practical understanding of diet, hygiene, exercise, and medicine. The point is that when physical education loses this vital unifying function it degenerates into mere "PE" courses that carry little or no educational--or

ethical--consequence. Such programs are reduced to a rigid set of routine drills or the narrow development of certain sport skills that can become a notoriously boring and unimaginative "gym" class for many students.

Consequently, a complete aesthetic education includes the duty to incorporate the physical arts of movement and exercise, developing a sense of "kin-esthetic" (literally, motion perception) awareness, as a vital method toward achieving the social and intellectual goals of education. Uncovering the relation of conscious movement and exercise to art, health, and science could transform present schooling. For example, when young children are schooled in the martial arts, they develop not only physical conditioning but also a sense of discipline and self confidence that can enhance the disposition for academic learning.<sup>25</sup> In the same context, the study of T'ai Chi Ch'uan (a traditional Chinese method for self cultivation) simultaneously embraces a holistic health exercise, a martial art for self defense, a dancelike form of grace and balance, and a scientific embodiment of the principles of human movement.<sup>26</sup> A kinesthetic method such as this carries a tremendous untapped potential for contributing to the well being of individuals and culture.

Other integrative systems of physical education such as the Alexander Technique of body mechanics and alignment and the Feldenkrais Method of "awareness through movement" can be used in schools as a means to cultivate health as well as to

enrich the artistic and scientific understanding of the human body.<sup>27</sup> In fact, Dewey endorsed the Alexander Technique as both practical and scientific, and he was one of Alexander's first American students!<sup>28</sup> Similarly, the Austrian educator and philosopher Rudolf Steiner (whose work will be discussed in the last chapter) had developed the moving art of "eurythmy" both as a therapeutic tool and a pedagogical method.<sup>29</sup> The scientific and practical basis for "Psychocalisthenics" provides yet another contemporary system of exercise that can be incorporated into schooling as a method integrating physical, emotional, and mental awareness.<sup>30</sup> Since American culture currently is undergoing a renewed appreciation of exercise and health "fitness," it seems an appropriate time for schooling also to develop its physical education curriculum with more vigor and variety.

In addition to the ancient role of gymnastice, the vital function of mousice, and thus the study of "music" particularly, also carries important implications for developing the aesthetic in education. Ironically, "art" education today usually refers to visual art study, which is separated from the study of music. When it exists, moreover, "music education" often is haphazard at the elementary school level, while in high school it usually is restricted to a "band" practice that seems to focus more on school competitions than the genuine aesthetic creation and appreciation of art.<sup>31</sup> Music in the ancient world, in

contrast, was taught to all students at an early age, and it included singing and dancing as well as playing musical instruments.<sup>32</sup> This practical grounding in making music then led to the study of music theory with its mathematical and philosophical connections.

In this century there have been significant contributions made toward using music as an aesthetic means to the intellectual aims of education, and such programs certainly could contribute more than they now do to the public school curriculum. Emile Dalcroze reconstructed the ancient Greek attitude toward music by building upon the aesthetic experience of sound and movement as a basis for teaching the mathematical science of music theory and composition.<sup>33</sup> Dalcroze was a Swiss professor of music who rejected the overly technical and "academic" method of music study that still is common at the university level. By developing an "education of rhythm as the link between mind and senses," he aimed to fuse aesthetic and intellectual meanings.<sup>34</sup> Dalcroze rooted the understanding of music in direct aesthetic experiences by using techniques such as "solfege," a sensory awareness and imagery evoked by sound; "eurhythmics," a dancelike movement to different rhythms; and improvisation that blended practice with innovation.<sup>35</sup> Renewing the classical idea that music in education can serve to unify and integrate, Dalcroze wrote that



To the charge of trespassing on the domain of education proper, the musician has only to invoke the authority of Plato and most of the Greek philosophers. . . . for evidence that every healthy educational system--that is, every system based on the intimately reciprocal reaction of body and mind, feeling and thought--assigns a preeminent place to music.<sup>36</sup>

By focusing on the integration of physical, emotional, and intellectual development in the experience of music, Dalcroze influenced other artists as well as other educators.<sup>37</sup> The Hungarian educator Zoltan Kodaly aimed to develop the skill of reading and writing musical notation, which signifies the literal language of music, by also basing conceptual understanding on concrete and immediate experiences. Kodaly used folk songs, accompanied by movement and imagery, as an aesthetic instrument with which to develop a genuine music literacy.<sup>38</sup> The German composer Carl Orff similarly combined music with movement and speech in his educational program of "Schulwerk" that had as its goal the development of creativity.<sup>39</sup> Orff emphasized the significance of creating music, and he applied specially designed percussion instruments as a resource for this aim.

What is especially important for this study is that the Schulwerk's creative activities are not viewed as ends in themselves; rather, they are embedded in a structured context and guided by the sense of a problem to be overcome. The aim, said Orff, goes beyond aesthetic immediacy "to form the habit of thinking creatively."<sup>40</sup> In a similar vein, Dewey once wrote that "upon its intellectual side, education consists of

the formation of wide awake, careful, thorough habits of thinking."<sup>41</sup> As shown in the previous chapter, it is this sense of pragmatic purpose, including the formation of certain habits, that prevents an aesthetic education from degenerating into random and aimless activities.

Furthermore, Orff developed the social and intellectual consequences of music study by connecting language to rhythm, using nursery rhymes, songs, chants, calls, and so on, as a verbal or linguistic method that is transformed into musical experience.<sup>42</sup> In other words, the spoken art of language is made the basis for the aesthetic appreciation and expression of music. This process is reciprocal, for, as we shall see in the last chapter, the "musical" qualities of speech, such as pitch, rhythm, and intonation (not to mention song and instrumental music), carry enormous potential for the teaching and learning of language itself.

The integrative potential of music in general education thus deserves more than a weekly classroom visit by the music specialist or a technical training for a marching band. Even the experience of "music appreciation" can be introduced early in schooling as a way to cultivate a larger sense of cultural literacy.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, the creation and appreciation of music provides more than just a vital end in itself, for, as the Greeks well understood, the experience of music leads naturally into the intellectual discipline of

theory and mathematics. Finally, proven methods of learning to play music, such as the Suzuki violin method, can be adapted to schooling as a way to cultivate both discipline and interest, confidence and creativity, within education.<sup>44</sup>

Despite there being a variety of artistic mediums, as well as senses upon which they are based, art education today generally refers to the visual arts, probably because of the pervasive role of visual images in our culture. (Even popular music is now strongly tied to video and visual performance.) It is interesting to note that visual art study also has its pedagogical roots in ancient Greece; thus Aristotle had endorsed graphike, or drawing, as a practical training and an important part of the school curriculum.<sup>45</sup> (Like Plato, Aristotle too had developed a theory of art, producing what is perhaps the first systematic work of literary criticism.<sup>46</sup>) The point is that the recognition of the pragmatic as well as aesthetic value of graphic art might inform present schooling at a time when art in education, like modern art in culture, usually is viewed as an end in itself.

Ironically, visual art training originally was taught in American schools for utilitarian purposes!<sup>47</sup> Drawing was introduced (around the 1870s) to help achieve business goals, while even "picture study" (beginning in the 1900s) was taught more for its practical than its inherent value.<sup>48</sup> But as modern art developed "art for art's sake," the justification for art education changed accordingly. Thus, the major

influence on American art education in this century has been the work of Viktor Lowenfeld, who advanced visual art study for its inherent value of "creative self expression."<sup>49</sup> Influenced, no doubt, by Piaget's developmental psychology, Lowenfeld also associated the organic evolution of the child's art with his or her social and cognitive growth.<sup>50</sup> But the activity of creating visual art was developed primarily for its intrinsic aesthetic value as a vital form of human expression.

Consequently, as a theoretical and historical reaction, the "creative" method for art study now is being viewed by some as a rather limited approach that ignores the intellectual "discipline" of art.<sup>51</sup> In fact, the current idea of a "discipline-based art education" (or DBAE) has stimulated a great social debate, questioning how and even why art should be taught in our nation's schools.<sup>52</sup> The idea seems to reflect a paradigm shift in art, as well as in general, education that aims to renew the structured content and knowledge-based disciplines of schooling.<sup>53</sup> Put simply, DBAE emerged as a cognitive and academic counterbalance to an art education based on the experience of "creativity," which supposedly lacks a coherent sense of structure, content, and discipline.

Of course, as shown in the previous chapter, there is nothing in its nature that prevents a creative activity from also being a pragmatic experiment cohesively developed

according to intelligently guided aims. Indeed, there is even the danger that the new idea may signify yet another swing of the pendulum, thereby preserving the specific dualism in education between "interest" and "discipline" (or play and work or experience and thinking) that Dewey had resolved long ago in Democracy and Education.<sup>54</sup> A balanced art education, as Dewey surely would agree, must integrate the knowledge-based discipline of the teacher with the vital interests and experiences of the students. Yet it seems quite ironic that the traditional split between feeling and thinking--or the aesthetic and the intellect--can plague even art education!<sup>55</sup>

Nonetheless, the meaning of a "discipline-based" art education is useful because the concept serves as a microcosm of the problems and possibilities of the aesthetic within schooling at large. The specific idea behind DBAE is that a complete art education must incorporate and integrate four distinct disciplines--namely, art production, art history, art criticism, and "aesthetics" or the philosophy of art.<sup>56</sup> (Of course, the way in which art teachers themselves are trained signifies the hidden fifth discipline of DBAE: the discipline of teaching!<sup>57</sup>) By emphasizing art's logical method and cognitive consequences, DBAE clearly helps to legitimize art study as more than merely a frill or "easy elective." The aim, then, is to recognize the study and practice of art as a valuable intellectual--as well as emotional--experience in the

general education of every student, rather than being only a special pursuit for some talented elite.

Equally significant is the fact that for a culture saturated with visual images in its popular art, commercial media, and even political campaigning, the development of an aesthetic or (at least) visual "literacy" can serve to educate American consumers, citizens, and connoisseurs for making intelligent, informed choices.<sup>58</sup> DBAE thus signifies an important cognitive pluralism that views literacy and, hence, intelligence as embracing more than the ability to understand verbal signs alone. Moreover, at a time when schooling appears increasingly fragmented and society is increasingly specialized, DBAE offers a means to reconstruct the principle of integration through an interdisciplinary approach to art study, in addition to the personal integration of perception, thought, and feeling that uniquely characterizes the experience of art.

By its very title, discipline-based art education carries a larger significance for education as a whole: it points to the meaning and method of "discipline" in all of schooling. Dewey's philosophy of education developed the idea that formal training historically has emphasized an external "discipline" of drill, testing, and obedience to authority rather than an internally focused interest and impulse toward learning. The point is that the meaning of "discipline" in DBAE functions primarily as a noun, referring to a body of

organized knowledge. The word, however, also can act as a verb, as in "to discipline" the body and mind, and it is this more active, intangible, and internal meaning that also needs to be developed. To define DBAE only in terms of the "disciplines" constituting it, and not in terms of its "disciplining" effects, misses an opportunity to cultivate the moral consequences inherent in the production, perception, and inquiry of art. It is this inner freedom toward concentrated effort (an impulsion, not a compulsion) that reveals the etymological as well as pedagogical connection between the hard won "discipline" and the wholehearted "disciples" of art study.

#### Incorporating the Aesthetic into Art Education

The challenges for DBAE reflect the larger challenges for developing the aesthetic in schooling. One challenge concerns how to balance the teaching of four distinct though interrelated disciplines, for a balanced integration is not simply a quantitative addition.<sup>59</sup> The discipline of making art, for example, requires a "creative impetus" significantly different from the "creative response" of art history, philosophy, and criticism.<sup>60</sup> In Deweyan terms, the qualitative thinking at the core of art as experience cannot be replaced by or be reduced to the conceptual thinking (and writing) that reflects upon it.<sup>61</sup>

The goal for education, then, is to integrate qualitative and critical thinking in a way that uses the

immediate production and perception of art--that is, the discipline of art making--as a catalyst to discover its social and intellectual meanings. In turn, the historical, critical, and philosophical methods of inquiry can be used to enhance and enrich, rather than substitute, the qualitative experience of art. Art education must cultivate both the primary experience of aesthetic creation and the academic knowledge-based disciplines emerging from and informing that experience. A significant consequence of this balanced integration is the need to develop both quantitative as well as qualitative methods for the evaluation and "testing" of student progress. The use of a personal journal, for example, provides a means whereby students can reflect intelligently on their study of art (or any subject for that matter) in a form that can reproduce the qualitative work of art.<sup>62</sup>

Redefining art making as a disciplined activity informed by skill and knowledge positively reconstructs the ancient Greek attitude that recognized aesthetic activity as a logical techné. However, in order to recover the technology of art making, the method of instruction need not sacrifice creative imagination to technique alone. The point is to signify that perhaps the greatest danger from a more cognitive and academic approach toward art is that such a "discipline" can degenerate into a rigidly technical and even anaesthetic experience, becoming, ironically, the enemy of art. Thus, DBAE's focus on student evaluation, "expert" knowledge, and



sequential systematic content seems to carry the inert idea of "discipline" as an enforced formalism of technical measurement and memorization of fact.<sup>63</sup> According to this view, DBAE runs the risk of reducing the aesthetic experience of art to a curriculum that is distorted into a "deadly-boring art education."<sup>64</sup> If gaining academic respectability for art means emphasizing the quantitative at the expense of the qualitative, then DBAE will fail to integrate art as aesthetic experience into education.

Indeed, the problem and paradox of art education possibly becoming an anaesthetic experience is not new. Dalcroze and those he influenced based their method on the premise that the theory and study of music is lifeless unless accompanied by vital aesthetic experiences. Dewey also had noted the irony that the subject matter of the arts often is taught in a way that stresses technical routine and mindless repetition rather than developing genuine aesthetic understanding.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, Dewey remarked on the contradiction of justifying the arts on the grounds of their "cultural" value, but then teaching them in schools "with chief emphasis upon forming technical modes of skill."<sup>66</sup> If the facts and techniques of art become ends in themselves instead of a means to enhance the quality of art, then even art education can become rote and inert. The larger art of schooling cannot develop without a strong foundation of aesthetic experience in art education!

Another challenge underlying every program of art education is the issue of defining what is "art," which then determines what is taught. For example, the idea of an "aesthetic" education naturally incorporates all the senses and, hence, all the forms of art (including music, poetry, and the performing arts). Despite its limitations, Herbert Read's program of "education through art" pointed to such a range of sense as well as its corresponding breadth of art forms.<sup>67</sup> Yet a synaesthetic approach to art education is ignored by DBAE, which derives its content solely from the visual arts--excluding even the cinema.<sup>68</sup> But film is arguably the art form of our time, both in terms of popular appeal and technical innovation. Moreover, the "movies" are literally moving pictures; the "cinema" signifies a kinetic succession of images and certainly is a form of visual art! Furthermore, the movies represent both a synaesthetic and a uniquely democratic art in that a community and variety of aesthetic forms such as cinematography, music, acting, writing, editing, staging, and directing work together to constitute the whole. To neglect the aesthetic as well as social and intellectual value and use of film in any form of disciplined art study is a grave mistake.

The need for "visual literacy" (and its cultural relation to movies, video, advertising, and television) notwithstanding, why limit any inquiry of art to visual art only? Music certainly has its own history, criticism, and

philosophy that can contribute to the understanding and appreciation of art as a whole. Perhaps it is a modern prejudice to narrowly restrict a discipline-based art education to visual art, as if other art forms like theatre, dance, and even the martial arts do not have their own theory, technique, and "discipline." A genuinely interdisciplinary approach to art education can integrate the full scope of aesthetic sense perception from which the various arts are derived. Thus, sight and sound would correspond to visual art and music, respectively, while the sense of touch also is exercised and even refined through playing music or making tangible art images. The related (and neglected) senses of taste and smell also imply the significance of practical arts like cooking or gardening, which can be a foundation for the study of diet or botany. The sixth sense is that of balance and movement, which can be developed through a physical, kinesthetic training.

The question of what constitutes art also carries meaning for any program of art education in a democratic society. Some critics have accused DBAE of autocratically preserving the status quo by valuing and teaching only the "high art" masterpieces of Western culture.<sup>69</sup> An art education based on "expert" knowledge of the "classics" can isolate students from their own immediate aesthetic outlets through, say, movies, comics, or MTV. Such an "elitist" approach seems to deny "popular" art the full function and

value of the aesthetic. On the other side, there is the real danger that art as well as education may become diluted and artificial if aesthetic tastes are not guided by critical standards, values, and ideals. Consequently, a complete and democratic art education must unify the present aesthetic standards of youth with the enduring and ennobling masterpieces of past culture. In fact, a big part of the art of teaching lies in knowing how to bridge the old art forms with the new aesthetic values.

Another problem for schooling concerns the role of nonWestern art, or even such modern democratic forms as ethnic, environmental, feminist, graffiti, and computer art. There is a legitimate concern for conserving the integrity of art as well as schooling, so that it does not degenerate into an aesthetic soup. However, if an art education based on the canons of tradition and the academic disciplines promotes an authoritative approach as to what constitutes "real" art, then it seems unsuited for the goals of democracy. Despite the danger, an art education based on knowledge and discipline need not promote an authoritarian view that restricts the value of the aesthetic in an open pluralistic society.<sup>70</sup>

In conclusion, a complete art education can unite the meaning of art as inherently valuable (art for art's sake) with its larger social and educational context. DBAE epitomizes the trend toward developing the discipline of art study as an end in itself, instead of using art as a vehicle

to some other end such as "therapy, personality development or even academic skills." But if the act of creating art develops "self-confidence" and "sensitivity to feelings," as the same writer claims, then it naturally can become a resource for motivating the "academic" learning that also is facilitated by such qualities.<sup>71</sup> The study of art criticism too has an obvious purpose beyond itself in that it develops critical thinking. The philosophy of art does not signify a mere set of theories to be learned for its own sake (as the wooden word "aesthetics" might imply); rather, it denotes a dynamic and ongoing activity of questioning. The experience of aesthetic inquiry awakens awareness and self observation, cultivating a general philosophic disposition toward all lived activities! And art history, especially, suggests much more than merely the study of past artifacts for its own sake. When placed in context, works of art like film, literature, painting, and architecture provide a vital means to illuminate and enliven the understanding of history itself. In other words, art can become a useful method for the teaching and learning of history in schools.

Consequently, a "discipline-based" art education can be used to develop an "aesthetic-based" general education. If DBAE carries the seeds for nourishing the intellectual and social consequences of the art experience, then it also carries the potential to transform the "basics" of schooling into the quality of art, thereby revitalizing the entire

curriculum. When aesthetic forms and activities are used as educational instruments to teach history, geography, language, mathematics, and science, those subjects become transformed through a more immediate appreciation. It is this idea that completes and rounds out aesthetic education, and it is this idea that will be used to complete the study in the final chapter.

#### Notes:

1. See Katrine Ames, "Why Jane Can't Draw (or Sing, or Dance)," Newsweek, Fall/Winter 1990-1991 (Special Edition: "How to Teach our Kids"), 40-49; and Merle Flannery, "Art for the Masses," Art Education, vol. 25, no. 5 (May 1972), 19-20.
2. Cf. Herbert Read, Education through Art (London: Faber and Faber, 1958); and David Swanger, "Shadow and Light: Read, Dewey, Plato, and Aesthetic Education," Journal of Education, vol. 164, no. 3 (Summer 1982), 256-269. Although both Read and Swanger cite Plato as the source of aesthetic education, each develops the concept quite differently.
3. In contrast to our more visually oriented society, Greek culture was predominantly aural; poetry was recited aloud and usually accompanied by music. See Peter Walcott, Greek Drama in its Theatrical and Social Context (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1976).
4. H.I. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity, trans. by G. Lamb (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982; orig. pub. 1948), p. 9. Before Socrates and the Sophists, Homer's poetry was the primary educational and ethical text for Greek youth, whose schooling was chiefly military and athletic or based on a single mentor relationship.
5. Plato, The Republic (Book III), trans. by D. Lee (New York: Penguin Books, 1955), pp. 129-161. Plato sought to regulate not only the form and content of poetry but also the different modes of music because of their unique effects on the psyche. For Dewey's comments on Plato's view of art in education, see John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934), p. 291.

6. Indeed, Plato did not idealize democracy; his beloved teacher Socrates, we recall, was sentenced to death by a democratic vote of Athenian citizens. For a renewed discussion of this historical event, see Irving Stone, The Trial of Socrates (New York: Doubleday, 1989).
7. Swanger, "Shadow and Light," p. 257. Swanger contends (p. 263) that Read (and Dewey) invented "a democratic aesthetic to extend the reach of art [in contrast to] Plato's . . . resolve that poets are to be banished from the Republic."
8. Ibid., p. 267.
9. Great Dialogues of Plato, trans. by W.H.D. Rouse (New York: New American Library, 1956), p. 200.
10. See Thomas Paxon, "Art and Paideia," Journal of Aesthetic Education, vol. 19, no. 1 (Spring 1985), pp. 75-76, who develops the ancient meaning of mimesis to imply that "works of art . . . can imitate the eternal Forms. [Hence] if painting or sculpture could direct our attention effectively to these eternal Forms, then such art would be paideutic in the fullest possible sense; it would be genuinely philosophical art."
11. Sem Dresden Humanism in the Renaissance, trans. by M. King (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), pp. 24-32. Neoplatonism influenced such artists as Botticelli, Brunelleschi, Michaelangelo, and Piero della Francesca, who was also a mathematician. See also M. Emmer, "Art and Mathematics: The Platonic Solids," Leonardo, vol. 15 (1982), 277-282; and B. Carter, "A Mathematical Interpretation of Piero della Francesca's Baptism of Christ," appendix in M. Lavin, Piero della Francesca's Baptism of Christ (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), pp. 149-163.
12. Dewey aimed schooling at the social needs of a democracy, while Plato aimed to school a philosophical elite who could lead the state. Two of the ten books in Plato's Republic are devoted specifically to education: Book III discusses the methods and aims of a preliminary schooling while Book VII proposes the higher education of the philosopher/king. The last book (Book X), incidentally, outlines a theory of art.
13. Paxon, "Art and Paideia," p. 68. Sappho's school for women also was devoted to the "disciples of the Muses." See Marrou, History of Education in Antiquity, p. 34.

14. Ibid., pp. 46-47. The first organized "schools" or social learning centers in the Greek world were devoted specifically to medicine and philosophy.
15. See Plato, The Republic (Book III), pp. 165-176, for the discussion of "music" and "gymnastics" in schooling.
16. Ibid., p. 176. Cf. also pp. 162, 165, "Good literature and good music, beauty of form and rhythm, all depend on goodness of character. . . . The object of education is to teach us to love what is beautiful."
17. Ibid. (Book VII), pp. 331-347.
18. Numerology carried a mystical value for the Greeks, who also used a complex system of computing numbers on the fingers of the hands--a sort of kinesthetic exercise in arithmetic! See Marrou, History of Education in Antiquity, pp. 157, 180.
19. Pythagoras' school in the sixth century B.C. was a religious philosophical community that developed an advanced study of mathematics as an embodiment of musical and mystical properties. Plato's mysticism, music, and mathematics suggests a direct link to the Pythagorean tradition. See Kenneth Guthrie, The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 1987).
20. Marrou, History of Education in Antiquity, p. 99. In the Hellenistic age, paideia became codified as the ideal of educating the whole person; translated to Latin, it later became the humanitas of the Renaissance.
21. Ibid., p. 220.
22. Ibid., pp. 79-91, 196. Isocrates' emphasis on correct literary expression as an "image of a good and trustworthy soul" became the foundation for the Latin tradition of humanist scholarship. Aristotle was also at one time a teacher of rhetoric.
23. Ibid., p. 177. Of course, Plato also had criticized the Sophists' method and aim; and in the Apology, Socrates refused to use any oratorical "tricks" in arguing his case. See Great Dialogues of Plato, pp. 423-446.
24. Ibid., p. 72.
25. See James Zumwalt, "To Win Life's Contest," Parade Magazine, 13 January 1991, 14-16, for the story of a Korean martial arts teacher, Jhoon Rhee, who advocates



instruction for children as a way to develop discipline and self esteem. (Rhee was responsible for bringing the Korean "hard" style art of Tae Kwan Do to the United States in the 1950s.)

26. Cheng Man-ch'ing, T'ai Chi Ch'uan: A Simplified Method of Calisthenics for Health and Self Defense (Berkely, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1981).
27. Frank P. Jones, Body Awareness in Action: A Study of the Alexander Technique (New York: Schocken Books, 1976); and Moshe Feldenkrais, Awareness Through Movement (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).
28. Jones, Body Awareness in Action, pp. 94-105. Dewey considered the Alexander method to be a scientific demonstration of the practical unity between body and mind, and an entire chapter of this book deals with the association between Dewey and Alexander!
29. Marjorie Raffae, Cecil Harwood, and Marguerite Lundgren, Eurythmy and the Impulse of Dance (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1974).
30. Oscar Ichazo, Master Level Exercise: Psychocalisthenics (New York: Sequoia Press, 1986).
31. J. Mercer, "Is the Curriculum the Score--or More?" Music Educators Journal, vol 58 (Feb. 1972), 51-53.
32. Marrou, History of Education in Antiquity, pp. 135-137. A stringed lyre and a wooden flute were the two chief instruments that were taught in Greek schools.
33. Read, Education Through Art, pp. 65-66, cites Dalcroze as a modern reviver of Plato's aesthetic education.
34. Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, Eurhythmics, Art and Education (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), p. 111.
35. See Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, Rhythm, Music and Education (New York: Benjamin Bloom, 1921).
36. Ibid., p. 166.
37. See B. Landis and P. Carder, The Eclectic Curriculum in American Music Education: Contributions of Dalcroze, Kodaly, and Orff (Washington D.C.: Music Educators National Conference, 1972). Dalcroze also influenced the pioneers of modern dance, who, at around the same time, were rejecting the formalism of classical ballet.

38. Ibid., pp. 43-46.
39. Ibid., pp. 71-107.
40. Ibid., p. 87 (emphasis mine).
41. John Dewey, How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1933), p. 78.
42. J. Thresher, "The Contributions of Carl Orff to Elementary Music Education," Music Educators Journal, vol. 50 (1964), 43-48. Orff (like Kodaly) believed that the child's musical growth imitated or recapitulated the musical evolution of culture; thus, "primitive" (pentatonic) musical scales are emphasized.
43. See Don Campbell, Introduction to the Musical Brain (St. Louis, MO: MagnaMusic-Baton, 1983), for some creative methods of developing music appreciation.
44. Shinichi Suzuki, Nurtured by Love: The Classic Approach to Talent Education, 2d ed., trans. by W. Suzuki (New York: Exposition Press, 1983; orig. pub. 1969).
45. Cited in Paxon, "Art and Paideia," pp. 70-71. Aristotle had distinguished the "liberal arts" of mousice from the "practical" training in graphike which developed both observation skills and artistic taste. Greek visual art included public frescoes, vase paintings, temple sculpture, and the scenic backdrops to the theatre.
46. Aristotle's Poetics is a comprehensive analysis of the function and structure of Greek poetry in its epic, lyric, and tragic forms. See Aristotle on the Art of Poetry, rev. ed., ed. by Lane Cooper, trans. by I. Bywater (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1947).
47. Merle Curti, The Social Ideas of American Educators (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams, & Co., 1978; orig. pub. 1935), p. 224. See also Foster Wygant, Art in American Schools in the Nineteenth Century (Cincinnati: Interwood Press, 1983).
48. Evan Kern, "Antecedents of DBAE: State Departments of Education Curriculum Documents," in Discipline-Based Art Education: Origins, Meaning, and Development, ed. by Ralph Smith (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), pp. 37-38. Picture study was aimed at "moral training" and "citizenship," while drawing contributed to the needs of industrial design.

49. See Ralph Smith, "The Changing Image of Art Education: Theoretical Antecedents of Discipline-Based Art Education," in Discipline-Based Art Education, pp. 3-34.
50. Viktor Lowenfeld and W. Lambert Brittain, Creative and Mental Growth, 7th ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1982; orig. pub. 1947). Lowenfeld outlined a formal sequence of artistic growth that paralleled the stages of cognitive development. See also Rhoda Kellogg, Analyzing Children's Art (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield Publishing, 1969).
51. Beyond Creating: The Place for Art in America's Schools (Los Angeles: The Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1985). The resources of the Getty Center continue to support the theory and practice of DBAE.
52. Margaret Moorman, "The Great Art Education Debate," Art News (Summer 1989), 124-131.
53. Modelling school subjects after the professional "disciplines" is not a new idea; Jerome Bruner had advocated something similar in The Process of Education (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960). Like DBAE, the recent proposal for cultural literacy also is based on the need for more structured or ("disciplined") content in the school curriculum. See E.D. Hirsch Jr., Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987).
54. John Dewey, "Interest and Discipline," "Experience and Thinking," and "Play and Work in the Curriculum," chapters in Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916), pp. 124-138, 139-151, and 194-206. Cf., for example, p. 129: "It is hardly necessary to press the point that interest and discipline are connected, not opposed. Even the more purely intellectual phase of trained power . . . will be perfunctory and superficial where there is no interest."
55. Cf. Smith, "The Changing Image of Art Education," pp. 18-19: "Art education has swung from one extreme to the other--from an interest in art's affective dimensions to its cognitive dimensions--which suggests that a problem for the remainder of the century is to effect a viable synthesis of feeling and reason in the understanding and appreciation of art."
56. For a comprehensive synopsis of DBAE, see Gilbert Clark, Michael Day, and Dwaine Greer, "Discipline-Based Art Education: Becoming Students of Art," in Discipline-Based Art Education, pp. 129-196.

57. Maurice Sevigny, "Discipline-Based Art Education and Teacher Education," in Discipline-Based Art Education, pp. 95-126, concludes that the education of art teachers has remained unchanged, which poses a problem for renewing art education! See also Harry Broudy, "DBAE: Complaints, Reminiscences, and Response," Educational Theory, vol. 40, no. 4 (Fall 1990), 431-436, who notes that requiring the classroom teacher, rather than the arts specialist, to instruct a DBAE is one of the program's most novel--and contested--ideas.
58. For the idea of aesthetic literacy, see Maxine Greene, "Aesthetic Literacy in General Education," in Philosophy and Education: Eightieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Vol. I, ed. by J. Soltis (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 114-141.
59. Donald Arnstine, "Art, Aesthetics, and the Pitfalls of Discipline-Based Art Education," Educational Theory, vol. 40, no. 4 (Fall 1990), 415-422, notes that DBAE's disciplines overlap and even contradict one another.
60. David Swanger, "Discipline-Based Art Education: Heat and Light," Educational Theory, vol. 40, no. 4 (Fall 1990), 437-442.
61. See Dewey, Art as Experience, pp. 73-74.
62. See Mary Erickson, "Historical Thinking and Aesthetic Education," Journal of Aesthetic Education, vol. 13, no. 4 (Oct. 1979), 81-92, and Ira Progoff, At a Journal Workshop (New York: Dialogue House Library, 1975), for the use of the journal as a creative educational tool.
63. Beyond DBAE: The Case for Multiple Visions of Art Education, ed. by J. Burton, A. Lederman, and P. London (North Dartmouth, MA: The University Council on Art Education, 1988).
64. Ibid., p. 96.
65. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 143: "Drawing, singing and writing may be taught in the same mechanical way; for, any way is mechanical which narrows down the bodily activity so that a separation of body from mind--that is, from recognition of meaning--is set up."
66. Ibid., p. 258.
67. Read, Education Through Art, p. 7, stated that aesthetic education signifies "the education of those senses upon which consciousness, and ultimately the intelligence and

judgment of the human individual, are based." Read was a philosopher of art, not an educator, and his theory, though valuable, remains somewhat impractical. It is based on four distinct areas: "design" signified a visual art education in painting, drawing and sculpture; "dance" included music as well as movement and rhythm; "drama" signified poetry and literature; and "craft" concerned (not the vocational arts of, say, metal or woodwork but) the basics of mathematics and science. Read's pedagogy is based on (Jungian) psychological categories, but it fails to develop an organically integrated curriculum, or psyche.

68. W. Eugene Kleinbauer, "Art History in Discipline-based Art Education," in Discipline-Based Art Education, pp. 208-209.
69. See Beyond DBAE, p. 80, and Arnstine, "Art, Aesthetics, and the Pitfalls of DBAE," pp. 417-418.
70. For example, Elliot Eisner, "Discipline-Based Art Education: Conceptions and Misconceptions," Educational Theory, vol. 40, no. 4 (Fall 1990), pp. 427-428, states that DBAE does not necessarily exclude nontraditional forms such as popular art, folk art, and so forth.
71. Frederick Spratt, "Art Production in DBAE," in Discipline-Based Art Education, pp. 198-199.

CHAPTER 8  
AESTHETIC SCHOOLING:  
TEACHING THE BASICS THROUGH ART

All true education must develop from the foundation of art. The reason why education in our day leaves so much to be desired is because modern civilization is not conducive to the development of artistic feeling.

Rudolf Steiner

Aesthetic education embraces the whole curriculum rather than art education alone. Yet the subject matter of the arts is the richest resource for transmitting aesthetic quality to, and thereby transforming, the other academic disciplines. Dewey noted long ago the educational value of such aesthetic "occupations," both in the artistic sense of drawing, singing, and painting and in the etymological sense of activities such as gardening, cooking, and weaving.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Dewey's famous "learning by doing" maxim was stated in a context that challenged education to use aesthetic experience as the initial stage of the school curriculum:

When education, under the influence of a scholastic conception of knowledge . . . fails to recognize that primary or initial subject matter always exists as a matter of an active doing, involving the use of the body and the handling of material, the subject matter of instruction is isolated from the needs and purposes of the learner, and so becomes just a something to be memorized and reproduced upon demand. Recognition of the natural course of development, on the contrary, always sets out with situations which involve learning by doing. Arts and occupations form the initial stage of the curriculum.<sup>2</sup>

Aesthetic activities naturally initiate the process of education; play, for example, is a vital learning opportunity for all young children. In addition, aesthetic activities carry the seed for developing a complete and comprehensive aesthetic practice throughout the entire course of schooling. Furthermore, because subject matter and method coexist in every type of teaching and learning, an aesthetic education can serve to reflect and promote this organic integration. The ultimate function of aesthetic education, then, is to inform and cohere all subjects of the school curriculum through a vital aesthetic method. If the subject matter of the arts is used to cultivate a unifying qualitative context of instruction, then the "art of schooling" will emerge naturally. Indeed, we even can say that the vital appreciation that characterizes art and aesthetic experience is the most practical context for the science of education. Dewey expressed the vast potential that the quality of art carries for transforming all of schooling when he stated,

It is, then, a serious mistake to regard appreciation as if it were confined to such things as literature and pictures and music. Its scope is as comprehensive as the work of education itself. The formation of habits is a purely mechanical thing unless habits are also tastes--habitual modes of preference and esteem, an effective sense of excellence. . . . Literature and the fine arts are of peculiar value because they represent appreciation at its best--a heightened realization of meaning through selection and concentration. But every subject at some phase of its development should possess, what is for the individual concerned with it, an aesthetic quality.<sup>3</sup>

The Humanities--Embodying Art as Subject and Method

One aim of this study has been to show that the meaning and function of art has a profound significance for both philosophy and education. The theoretical problems of aesthetic inquiry run parallel to the practical problems of education. One such problem concerns the way in which the form of art is distinguished from its content, leading to yet another dualism. Thus, historically we find aesthetic theories that emphasize an intrinsic "formalism" of how art is presented (sometimes justified as art for art's sake) over against an objective "referentialism" (such as the traditional idea of art as "imitation") that focuses more on what is presented.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to this split, Dewey pointed out that the work of art as a lived experience embodies the unity of substance and form.

Hence there can be no distinction drawn, save in reflection, between form and substance. The work itself is matter formed into aesthetic substance. . . . The act is exactly what it is because of how it is done. In the act there is no distinction, but perfect integration of manner and content, form and substance.<sup>5</sup>

The parallel problem for pedagogy--as art and science--is the traditional dualism between the subject matter and the method of education, a dualism based on the epistemological split of mind and matter.<sup>6</sup> Consequently, Dewey implied that the work of education is also an aesthetic integration of form and content, or method and subject matter, because



Method means that arrangement of subject matter which makes it most effective in use. Never is method something outside of the material. . . . Experience is not a combination of mind and world, subject and object, method and subject matter, but is a single continuous interaction of a great diversity of energies."<sup>7</sup>

The point is that every subject of instruction, from astronomy and algebra to art history and architecture, becomes an educational discipline precisely because it has been organized through a guiding intellectual principle--or method. On the other side, every method of education (which corresponds to the "form" of art) can be developed only in relation to a particular subject (or "content") of experience. From the standpoint of schooling, this means that a vital aesthetic method can be used to teach any subject, even though its form necessarily will vary according to the subject matter being taught. Aesthetic education incorporates both the substance and the method of art.

The idea is significant because it reveals the error in theories of aesthetic education that oscillate between the two extremes, focusing either on aesthetic subject matter or aesthetic method without explicitly tying them together. For example, one author has endorsed the "educational value of aesthetic experience" by developing a general method of education that uses "charged images" and an "emotional quality" in order to maintain the focus, enthusiasm, and sensitivity that learning requires.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the manner in which any subject matter is presented can make learning stimulating and exciting or dull and boring. The aesthetic

(or the anaesthetic) potentially permeates the entire curriculum; it cannot be specialized and departmentalized into, say, art education alone. However, the emphasis on aesthetic method usually fails to indicate how its concrete application naturally will vary according to the type of subject matter being studied. Also, this focus may even neglect art education itself as the best resource from which to develop an overall aesthetic context. Herbert Read's seminal idea of "education through art" is perhaps another example of a rather vague aesthetic method that, while embracing the arts themselves, remains somewhat impractical for teaching the basics.<sup>9</sup>

In response, other writers thus argue against the dilution of the aesthetic in schooling and assert that an aesthetic education must deal primarily and exclusively with the provocative subject matter of the arts themselves.<sup>10</sup> This idea develops the valuable educational potential within the uncertain or unsettling nature of especially modern art. Yet it also seems to continue the social isolation that segregates out the aesthetic as the unique domain of fine art alone. In fact, many programs preserve this rather narrow idea that "aesthetic" education constitutes simply a more refined appreciation for the fine arts. For example, both the IMPACT and the CEMREL projects of the 1960s were basically programs of fine art appreciation.<sup>11</sup> Any program aimed at cultivating a sensitivity and appreciation for art certainly

is valuable for doing just that. But a conception of aesthetic education that is limited only to fine art appreciation ends up ignoring the vast role that art, as an intellectual and creative process, offers as a means for reconstructing the context of schooling as a whole.

The point of all this is to indicate the vital role of the humanities in the school curriculum for integrating the actual substance of art with distinctly qualitative forms of inquiry. The humanities naturally deal with artistic subject matter, such as music, architecture, literature, art history, mythology, and even philosophy, that is researched according to historical, cultural, and critical methods.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the interdisciplinary approach that characterizes the study of the humanities is akin to the recent idea for a "discipline-based art education" that was discussed in the previous chapter. Yet one problem for DBAE is to resolve the tension that results from adopting a more integrative and comprehensive approach while at the same time becoming more academic and specialized. Not coincidentally, this is the same difficulty that seems to affect the teaching of the humanities at the college level, especially to the degree that they, too, become narrowly specialized, technical, and nonqualitative. In earlier times, the teaching of humanitas signified all subjects of learning, artistic and scientific, because all were connected specifically to human interests and aims.

The classical ideal transcended technical considerations: an educated man began by being human . . . . [And] here again the contrast with our own attitude is instructive . . . and we may perhaps learn something from the Greeks' insistence that any specialized activity needs to be guided by human considerations.<sup>13</sup>

Today, the subject of the "humanities" seems to have become another technical academic specialization (if it is taught at all). Nevertheless, the humanities still carry an organic cohesive function as the vital bridge between the aesthetic content of art and the qualitative methods of aesthetic inquiry. The humanities--as the study of our humanity--signify a genuinely interdisciplinary approach that unifies art, philosophy, history, religion, science, and literature into a disciplined and creative inquiry. From this, again Deweyan, perspective, the idea of the humanities is essential to all education, for it signifies the extent to which teaching and learning become humane.

Knowledge is humanistic in quality not because it is about human products in the past, but because of what it does in liberating human intelligence and human sympathy. Any subject matter which accomplishes this result is humane, and any subject matter which does not accomplish it is not even educational.<sup>14</sup>

#### Art as a Means to Intellect-- Pioneers of the Aesthetic Curriculum

After developing the arts and humanities, the practice of aesthetic education is complete only if it then is used to transform the teaching of the "basic" skills of reading, writing, and reflective thinking into the quality of art. In order to reconstruct the aesthetic base of language,

mathematics, and science, it is useful to cite some specific programs and educators that have applied the quality of art toward the social and intellectual aims of schooling. Dewey refrained from making specific, detailed recommendations for educational practice, perhaps because he realized how often such techniques simply are interpreted dogmatically and then misused as ends in themselves. By understanding the pedagogical need to adapt flexibly to the specific context of setting, subject matter, and students, and, thus, by not providing overly technical indications, Dewey seems to challenge teachers to develop this attitude of flexibility and responsibility.

Nevertheless, there are educators who have introduced specific aesthetic methods or techniques for teaching and learning. Despite the danger that these means can become used in a mechanical way, without leading to intelligently guided outcomes, they still are instructive for developing a complete aesthetic education. Moreover, these methods (which were originated in Europe) continue to remain outside the American public school curriculum. As a form of "private" schooling, these ideas, unfortunately, have not been adopted or even much researched by the public school system. Yet there is no reason why they cannot be adapted to the needs of public schooling. Finally, each of the pedagogical pioneers that will be cited has developed a practical and proven method of

schooling that runs parallel to a Deweyan conception of aesthetic education.

Beginning with the initial years of schooling--if not preschooling--the Montessori Method literally cultivates the aesthetic because it is based on an "education of the senses."<sup>15</sup> Maria Montessori (the first woman to graduate with a medical degree from the University of Rome) used her training to develop a "scientific pedagogy" that was based on practical experience and empirical method. She tested her ideas in the laboratory of education, and she also shared with Dewey the revolution against the traditional, abstract, fact-feeding method of schooling. Rather than begin education with conceptual drills and enforced thought, Montessori showed that reflective thinking and inquiry will emerge naturally from the difficulties encountered through the concrete, sensory interaction with qualitative relations.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, Montessori innovated the use of aesthetic relations in form, color, weight, texture, sound, flavor, temperature, balance, and so on, as means to develop intelligence and imagination. Indeed, her definition of the imagination as practical, rather than fanciful, seems to echo Dewey.<sup>17</sup> The Montessori Method of early childhood education uses a wide range of aesthetic objects such as colored beads, musical bells, liquid containers, and geometric puzzles to create concrete problems that will elicit mathematical, linguistic, or scientific thinking. Montessori does not seem

to advocate an education based on "free play" or aimless sensory stimulation, for her method represents an "activity concentrated on some task that requires movement of the hands guided by the intellect."<sup>18</sup> However, the teacher must at all times prevent such activities from becoming isolated sensory exercises, that is, ends in themselves, divorced from intellectual aims.

In sum, the Montessori Method continues the European pedagogical tradition of Pestalozzi and Froebel who first developed a distinctly qualitative context of education for addressing the special needs of young children.<sup>19</sup> For over a century, these ideas have been transplanted to American soil, and the Montessori system of schools today represents one of the few successful and organized forms of private (nonsectarian) education in our country. Montessori schooling is grounded in the vital need for providing a nurturing atmosphere and an aesthetic environment of learning by doing. The point to make is that these schools provide an alternative method of early education that can inform--and even reform--public elementary schools as well as American daycare centers at a time when society is paying more attention to the effects of early childhood experience and, hence, the importance of early childhood education!

Bulgarian scientist Georgi Lozanov also has developed a uniquely aesthetic method of pedagogical instruction. Initially interested in the neurological characteristics of

hypermnnesia, or the ability to memorize vast quantities of information, Lozanov experimented with ways to increase memory for learning. Beginning in 1965, he developed a method for the teaching of foreign languages that--significantly unlike the split-brain idea--assumes an organic integration of brain functioning, especially as it is applied to education.

The functional unity of the two hemispheres . . . is indissoluble. This means that in teaching practice, the emotional-motivational complex, the setup, the imaginative thinking and the logical abstraction should be simultaneously activated in complex and indivisible unity.<sup>20</sup>

Believing that tension and anxiety anaesthetize learning, Lozanov developed physical techniques of stress reduction, breathing, and other exercises that were proven to facilitate education.<sup>21</sup> His method for teaching language explicitly integrated "didactic" material with "artistic" quality, signifying the unity of content and form. Dewey implied the same unity in language and in instruction when he said, "All language, whatever its medium, involves what is said and how it is said, or substance and form."<sup>22</sup> The point for schooling is to emphasize that the manner of presenting material, that is, the method of instruction, is a vital factor in the assimilation and understanding of subject matter.

Consequently, Lozanov experimented with the aesthetic qualities of language, such as the pitch, rhythm, and intonation of the voice, as a poetic way to introduce the academic material of grammar and vocabulary. He found that



the immediate apprehension of linguistic information, as a qualitative aesthetic experience, dramatically increased its comprehension. He further cultivated the aesthetic context of teaching and learning by using musical recordings (specifically Classical and Baroque) to create a uniquely qualitative atmosphere for education.<sup>23</sup>

The results of Lozanov's research seem to confirm that aesthetic forms can be used profitably in education to stimulate interest and motivation, reduce anxiety, cultivate sensory awareness, and lead to intelligence. Even though the method originally was designed for language instruction, it can be applied to teaching other subjects. In fact, Lozanov himself subsequently devised programs for teaching reading, writing, and even mathematics, and concluded that "instruction in all subjects, for students in all age groups, can be reorganized on the basis of these principles . . . and their available means."<sup>24</sup> Lozanov's method, which has been called "superlearning," is important because it develops and uses the natural integration of conceptual and qualitative meanings.<sup>25</sup> Just as poetry embodies the unity of the symbolic meaning of words with their immediate aesthetic perception through sound and rhythm, all subjects of schooling likewise can become poetic when their qualitative aspects are used to enhance and enforce intellectual meaning.

In this context, Lozanov's technique carries a special significance for the teaching of the Language Arts in American

public education. It points, for example, to the use of song, poetry, and even comic books as a practical and effective way to teach especially foreign languages. At a time when international political cooperation as well as economic competition seem to be creating a global community, American schools have a practical and social responsibility to teach and learn foreign languages and culture. Art can serve this need. Even more importantly, at a time when the illiteracy rate in our own country seems alarmingly high, the cultivation of an aesthetic method for teaching English can rejuvenate an appreciation and understanding of the uses of language.

The final and perhaps most important practical resource for infusing modern methods of education with the quality of art is represented by the work of Rudolf Steiner and the Waldorf school system. Steiner was an Austrian-born philosopher, scientist, artist, and educator who in 1919 initiated the first Waldorf school in Germany.<sup>26</sup> Whether one accepts or rejects the metaphysical foundation of Steiner's pedagogy is not as important, for the purpose of this study, as the pragmatic evaluation of the method itself.<sup>27</sup> In fact, Steiner's basic thesis matches the Deweyan theme of this study: education represents the work of art, and the vital aesthetic quality of art can be developed in all forms of teaching and learning.

The theme of art permeates Steiner's educational theory, and he once stated, "The child must be taught

pictorially, and there must be a musical interplay between teacher and child. Intellectual training must follow artistic development."<sup>28</sup> Thus, Waldorf schools use images and pictures, fantasy and feeling, rhythm and movement, stories and games, as pragmatic means to the development of intelligence. The aesthetic unifies the Waldorf curriculum as a resource for teaching all school subjects. For example, ancient myths, fables, and legends--that is, poetic and emotionally charged stories--are used early in schooling to develop an appreciation for the meaning of history. Without such vital appreciation, the study of history usually degenerates into a rote learning, which may be a clue as to why American students know so little about American and world history. (In a recent survey, less than one third of high school students knew when the Civil War took place!) Modern educators addressing this problem point out that history is learned best when it comes alive as the artistic "story" of human events, not when it is taught through inert facts and boring textbooks.<sup>29</sup> Again, this points to the use of art forms such as film, literature, painting, and architecture as a vital resource for teaching history (as well as other social sciences and geography) even at the college level.

Significantly, Waldorf instruction bases its aesthetic method of education on an initial appreciation for the subject matter of the arts themselves. Steiner noted that "not only must our teaching itself be full of artistic feeling, but an

understanding of art must be awakened in the children."<sup>30</sup> From the earliest grades, Waldorf students are taught to play simple musical instruments like the recorder, to manipulate form and shape by modelling clay, and to experiment with the medium and quality of watercolor painting.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, children of all ages, both boys and girls, are exposed to the craft and handwork of knitting and crochet. Later, studies such as chemistry, physics, and anthropology can be developed from the genuine aesthetic activities of gardening, weaving, dyeing, and spinning. The aim, said Steiner, in a manner reminiscent of Dewey, is so that "knowledge of itself passes into practical skill, and practical skill is at the same time permeated with the quality of thought."<sup>32</sup>

From this basic grounding in direct aesthetic experience, the Waldorf curriculum develops literacy literally from art--thereby maintaining the meaning and integrity of the "Language Arts" in education. Language appreciation begins in the Waldorf school (as in ancient times) with the oral tradition of storytelling, and even writing begins (again as it did historically) with making pictographs rather than abstract phonetic symbols.<sup>33</sup> Fairy tales are used to speak directly to the child's sense of imagination, and the telling of such stories produces a genuine appreciation for language. Incidentally, a prominent child psychologist has written that the vivid poetic imagery and internal rhythm of fairy tales provide a valuable tool for assisting the emotional and

cognitive development of young children.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the American educator Jerome Bruner also has proposed that we reexamine the use of expressive material in drama, story, myth, and other "chronicles of passion" for the purpose of education.

A grasp of the basic plights through the basic myths of art and literature provides the organizing principle by which knowledge of the human condition is rendered into a form that makes thinking possible, by which we go beyond learning to the use of knowledge.<sup>35</sup>

The study of language in the Waldorf school begins with the oral experience of storytelling, enhanced by imagery and imagination, which then leads into the visual representation of writing. In synaesthetic fashion, the imagery of fairy tales, stories, and myths (from a variety of cultures) are acted out dramatically and expressed in painting. Writing then emerges from the child's artwork as, for example, a drawing of a snake becomes the letter "s" or that of a wave becomes a "w".<sup>36</sup> The act of writing comes out of art and leads to the more conceptual comprehension of language upon which words as symbols are based. The point is that this represents an orderly pragmatic progression from concrete image to intellectual concept. The shape of a letter, which in our language is an abstract phonetic symbol, now has meaning for the child because it is related to the child's experience.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, a lifelong seed is planted that develops the artistic quality within the concrete activity of writing itself. In other words, calligraphy is

considered a high art form in some cultures, whereas "handwriting" in American schools has lost much of its inherent aesthetic value!

Consequently, Steiner developed reading out of writing following a cumulative Deweyan process of learning by doing; hence, the concrete act of writing precedes the conceptual understanding of reading within the Waldorf curriculum.<sup>38</sup> Not coincidentally, modern research also seems to confirm this approach.<sup>39</sup> Moreover, after such aesthetic grounding, the mental act of reading easily takes on the quality of art as it too involves imagination and vision. In a similar way, arithmetic and mathematics also are developed out of artistic and kinesthetic activities. In sum, Steiner has encouraged teachers

to develop writing out of painting and thus give it an artistic form, and . . . [to] lead this over artistically to the teaching of reading, and this artistic treatment of reading and writing must be connected, again by artistic means, with the first simple beginnings of arithmetic. All this must thus form a unity.<sup>40</sup>

Thus, the aesthetic quality of numbers is developed. Counting is done with objects like acorns and shells, while arithmetic is introduced through rhythmic recitations or movement and clapping games. This then leads to written arithmetic. Again, the abstract concepts of mathematics, such as the value of Arabic numerals, are developed from direct experience, such as relating Roman numerals to the fingers of the hand. Artistic "form drawing" exercises of abstract or natural shapes further are used to develop an appreciation for

geometry. Even Steiner's original movement system of "eurythmy" is applied to the study of mathematics, as well as language.<sup>41</sup> All of this points to the inherent relation of art to mathematics and, thus, to the use of art to teach even advanced mathematics. Greek or Islamic architecture, for example, can provide a vital aesthetic instrument for illuminating the study of geometry; the linear perspective perfected by the Renaissance painters is another obvious way that art could be used to uncover mathematical relations. If public schooling, at all levels, were to cultivate the aesthetic quality of mathematics, and its related sciences, then perhaps we could better reach our national educational goals.

Finally, the basic tool for reflection and evaluation in the Waldorf school is the personal journal, which contains the student's academic lessons often accompanied by artwork. Significantly, such journals provide both a quantitative and a qualitative method for evaluating academic progress that give a detailed, concrete measurement of educational growth (especially when compared to a single letter grade on a report card). Similar qualitative methods of evaluation and even testing need to be developed in public schooling in order to round out and complement the traditional forms of academic measurement. Indeed, much of the aesthetic atmosphere and social quality of Waldorf education could be adapted usefully to American public schooling. In consequence, it can reveal

the way in which schooling itself becomes an art, and the role of the teacher becomes that of an artist.

### Conclusion--Art and Technology

Cultivating the art of schooling has a bearing on the future of American education and culture. It points, in a cyclical way, back to the ancient Greek philosophy that discovered the union of art and science through techne. We live in a time of immense technological revolution, when the tools of science and art can serve to either fracture and corrupt or mend and heal the very planet on which we live. It is a time for schools to reconstruct the ancient holistic attitude and tap the enormous aesthetic potential within the technology of modern society--its video technology, music technology, communications technology, and especially its computer technology. The conscious application of video, television, film, music recordings, transportation, and so forth, provide a contemporary means for using the aesthetic--not as mere entertainment or amusement but--as a disciplined and creative resource that can stimulate all forms of intellectual research. Anyone who has seen a child working with a computer discovers how technology can unify a vivid sensory as well as intellectual experience into an interaction that generates enthusiasm and the quest for inquiry. As long as the computer remains a creative tool for learning, rather than becoming a mandatory drill or a mechanical substitute teacher, the future hybrid of computer images and information



has tremendous worth for the practice of schooling.<sup>42</sup> In this way, the aesthetic attitude of the ancient world can come full circle to reconstruct and transform into art the work and activities that we face in the coming times.

#### Notes:

1. John Dewey, "The School and Society" (1899), in John Dewey on Education, ed. by R.D. Archambault (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 295-310.
2. John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916), pp. 184-185.
3. Ibid., pp. 235, 249.
4. See Bennett Reimer, A Philosophy of Music Education (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 12-27, for an example of these theories applied to music.
5. John Dewey, Art as Experience (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934), p. 109.
6. Dewey, Democracy and Education, pp. 164-165: "The idea that mind and the world of things and persons are two separate and independent realms--a theory which philosophically is known as dualism--carries with it the conclusion that method and subject matter of instruction are separate affairs. . . . [but] the notion of any such split is radically false."
7. Ibid., pp. 165, 167. Dewey also stated (p. 165), "The fact that the material of a science is organized is evidence that it has already been subjected to intelligence; it has been methodized, so to say."
8. Edmund Feldman, "The Educational Value of Aesthetic Experience," Harvard Educational Review, vol. 21 (Fall 1951), 225-232. For a later work, see Edmund Feldman, Becoming Human Through Art: Aesthetic Experience in the School (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970).
9. Herbert Read, Education Through Art (New York: Faber and Faber, 1958), p. 232, translates the aesthetic principles of "harmonious progression, balanced relationship, and achieved pattern" to the practice of schooling. His curriculum of design, drama, dance, and craft is derived from the psychological concepts of sensation, intuition,

feeling, and thinking. Read even stated (p. 245), incorrectly, that in Dewey's philosophy of art nowhere was a connection made between aesthetics and education!

10. David Swanger, "Shadow and Light: Read, Dewey, Plato, and Aesthetic Education," Journal of Education, vol. 164, no. 3 (Summer 1982), 256-269. For Swanger, the provocative, even subversive, nature of art best evokes the questioning attitude and active interpretation that is crucial for critical thinking. Dewey would agree, I think, but Swanger misinterprets him by associating Dewey too closely with Read.
11. The IMPACT (Interdisciplinary Model Program in the Arts for Children and Teachers) project was designed to effect a wider exposure to the arts for pupils; the CEMREL (Central Midwestern Regional Educational Laboratory) project was aimed at developing fine art resources for teachers in order to raise their students' level of "aesthetic awareness." See H. Abeles, C. Hoffer, and R. Klotman, Foundations of Music Education (New York: Schirmer Books, 1984), pp. 279-280.
12. A. Didier Graeffe, Creative Education in the Humanities (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1951).
13. H.I. Marrou, A History of Education in Antiquity, trans. by G. Lamb (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982; orig. pub. 1948), p. 225.
14. Dewey, Democracy and Education, p. 230.
15. Maria Montessori, The Montessori Method (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 216: "[Early childhood] is the time for the formation of the sense activities as related to the intellect. The child in this age develops his senses. . . . The stimuli, and not yet the reasons for things attract his attention. That is, therefore, the time when we should methodically direct the sense stimuli, in such a way that the sensations which he receives shall develop in a rational way. This sense training will prepare the ordered foundation upon which he may build a clear and strong mentality."
16. Maria Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), p. 203: "It is the qualities of the objects, not the objects themselves, which are important; although these qualities . . . are themselves represented by objects." Cf. John Dewey, How We Think: A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1933), pp. 224-225: "Instruction in number is not

concrete merely because splints or beans or dots are employed. Whenever the use and bearing of number relations are clearly perceived, a number idea is concrete even if figures alone are used" (my emphases).

17. Montessori, Spontaneous Activity in Education, p. 248: "Imagination can have only a sensory basis . . . . it is not an unbridled fancy . . . but it is a construction firmly allied to reality; and the more it holds fast to the forms of the external created world, the loftier will the value of its internal creations be." Cf. Dewey, How We Think, p. 214: "The healthy imagination deals not with the unreal, but with the mental realization of what is suggested. Its exercise is not a flight into the purely fanciful and ideal, but a method of expanding and filling in what is real."
18. Maria Montessori, The Secret of Childhood (New York: Ballantine Books, 1966), p. 138.
19. See Robert Ulich, History of Educational Thought, rev. ed. (New York: American Book Company, 1968), pp. 258-270, 284-291. Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852), a German transcendentalist, founded the kindergarten as a social learning environment centered around the needs and interests of the young child. The Swiss mystic and educational reformer Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) initiated the use of dynamic aesthetic methods in modern schooling. These two Europeans greatly influenced American educators in the nineteenth century.
20. Georgi Lozanov, Suggestology and Outlines of Suggestopedy (London: Gordon and Breach, 1978), p. 255.
21. Ibid., pp. 224, 258. After conducting controlled experiments, Lozanov found that the experimental group exhibited a 21.5 % increase in memorized vocabulary over the control group. The subjects also reported that the "psychorelaxation state" in the classroom not only enhanced immediate learning but reduced stress in other daily activities!
22. Dewey, Art as Experience, p. 106.
23. Lozanov, Suggestology, p. 198.
24. Ibid., p. 279.
25. See Sheila Ostrander, Superlearning (New York: Dell Publishing, 1979), for a discussion of Lozanov's contribution to education.

26. For an introduction to Steiner's work, see The Essential Steiner: Basic Writings of Rudolf Steiner, ed. by Robert McDermott (New York: Harper & Row, 1984).
27. Steiner developed a metaphysical philosophy, Anthroposophy, yet he insisted that the Waldorf school does not aim to promote any system of beliefs: "The fundamental question of the Waldorf School education is the human being himself, not the human being as an adherent of any particular philosophy." See Rudolf Steiner, Education and Modern Spiritual Life (London: Anthroposophical Publishing Co., 1928), p. 177. Despite this fact, Steiner's mysticism may be a reason why his pedagogical ideas have not been more widely applied.
28. Ibid., p. 12. See also M.C. Richards, Toward Wholeness: Rudolf Steiner Education in America (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1980); and A.C. Harwood, The Recovery of Man in Childhood: A Study in the Educational Work of Rudolf Steiner (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1958). There are two Waldorf teacher training colleges and a number of private Waldorf schools in the U.S.; in Europe the percentage of Waldorf schools is greater.
29. Jonathan Alter and Lydia Denworth, "A (Vague) Sense of History," Newsweek, Fall/Winter 1990-1991 (Special Edition: "How to Teach our Kids"), 31-33. In this context, the recently acclaimed PBS special on the Civil War is an example of how history comes alive, and can be taught, through aesthetic representation.
30. Steiner, Education and Modern Spiritual Life, p. 195.
31. Rudolf Steiner, The Kingdom of Childhood (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1964), p. 113: "It is of very great importance that you not only make all your teaching artistic, but that you also begin by teaching the more specifically artistic subjects, Painting, Modelling, and Music, as soon as the child comes to school."
32. Steiner, Education and Modern Spiritual Life, p. 199. Cf. Dewey, How We Think, pp. 216-217: "Perhaps the most pressing problem of education at the present moment is to organize and relate these [manual activities] so that they will become instruments for forming alert, persistent, and fruitful intellectual habits. . . . They may also be used for presenting typical problems . . . leading later to more specialized scientific knowledge."
33. Steiner believed (as did Orff and Kodaly) that the child's development passes through the same stages as the evolution of civilization; thus, storytelling precedes

writing and pictorial hieroglyphics precede the phonetic alphabet. See Steiner, The Kingdom of Childhood, p. 36; cf. also p. 45: "[For children] we can express a thing infinitely more fully and more richly if we clothe it in pictures than if we put it into abstract ideas."

34. Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 7: "The form and structure of fairy tales suggest images to the child by which he can structure his daydreams and with them give better direction to his life." In addition to this psychoanalytic view, Jung also developed the psychic function of fairy tales in depicting universal archetypes. See Carl Jung, Man and His Symbols (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964).
35. Jerome Bruner, "Learning and Thinking," Harvard Educational Review, vol. 29 (1959), p. 538, and Toward a Theory of Instruction (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 162-163.
36. Steiner, Education and Modern Spiritual Life, pp. 136-137. See also W. Holland, The Waldorf School (Inverness, CA: Children's Books Services, 1981).
37. Cf. Steiner, The Kingdom of Childhood, p. 38: "The letters are developed out of pictures and the pictures again directly out of life."
38. Steiner, Education and Modern Spiritual Life, pp. 137-138: "Reading is then recognized as an activity in which the child has already been employed. The whole process of development is spoilt if the child is led straight away to what is abstract, if he is taught to carry out any activity by means of a purely mental concept. . . . Therefore if reading is taught first, and not after writing, the child is prematurely involved in a process of development." Cf. Dewey, How We Think, p. 219: "An occupation has continuity. It is not a succession of unrelated acts, but is a consecutively ordered activity in which one step prepares the need for the next one and that one adds to, and carries further in a cumulative way, what has already been done."
39. See Barbara Kantrowitz, "The Reading Wars," Newsweek, Fall/Winter 1990-1991 (Special Edition: "How to Teach our Kids"), p. 14: "Most studies of reading have shown that there is a direct correlation between learning to write and learning to read. Children who are encouraged to write early--even before they know how to spell correctly --learn to read more quickly."

40. Steiner, The Kingdom of Childhood, p. 27.
41. M. Raffe, C. Hardwood, and M. Lundgren, Eurythmy and the Impulse of Dance (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1974).
42. See Michael Rogers, "MTV, IBM, Tennyson, and You," Newsweek, Fall/Winter 1990-1991 (Special Edition: "How to Teach our Kids"), 50-52.

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Scott Robert Farber was born January 23, 1957 in Jacksonville, Florida. He graduated with a B.A. (with high honors) in interdisciplinary studies from the University of Florida in 1979. His senior thesis explored the nature of creativity and its relation to education and psychology, especially child development. After graduation he worked for three years as a substitute teacher (K-12) in the Duval County School System, where he observed the practical need for aesthetic experience in education and began to experiment with such activities. He also worked as a music and art teacher in both preschool and summer camp programs. Then he travelled for two years throughout Europe. He entered the University of Florida as a graduate student and received a M.A.E. in 1985, presenting a master's thesis on the split-brain" theory and its implications for education.

As a graduate student, Scott was awarded a Graduate Council Fellowship and was appointed a graduate teaching assistant for five years. During that time he helped to develop an experimental course in the College of Education called "Human Relationships." He also has taught for the Institute of Holistic Education, done consulting work for the Florida department of HRS, and has presented academic papers

for the American Educational Studies Association and the Southeast Philosophy of Education Society. His doctoral work has developed the theory and practice of "aesthetic" education, using John Dewey's philosophy as a resource.

Scott's future goals are, first, to get a "real" job, preferably a university level teaching position, where he can teach and research the philosophy of education. He would like to continue to develop the idea and practice of "holistic" education, as well as the relation of art to teaching and learning. He also is interested in continuing his travels through cultivating international exchange programs in education. Currently, he lives in Neptune Beach, Florida, where he enjoys studying and teaching t'ai chi, playing music, and surfing whenever the waves are up!

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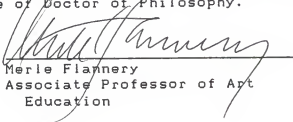
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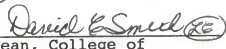
Thomas Auxter  
Associate Professor of  
Philosophy



This dissertation was submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the College of Education and to the Graduate School and was accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Chairman, Foundations of  
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Dean, College of  
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